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THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

DAVID MACBETH MOIR

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EDITED BY

THOMAS AIRD

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
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OCCASIONAL POEMS.

A SHADOW OF TRUTH.

WRITTEN IN OPPOSITION TO THE CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION BILL OF 1829.

I.

I HAD a wondrous vision—a dream, but not of night—
Manifold figures wild and strange came rushing on my sight;
Far 'mid the twilight of old time I saw them flitting by;
Melted the mould-damp of the grave, and brighten'd every eye,
As down to our unsettling days their awful looks they cast,
To see Experiment's rash feet down trampling all the past.

II.

The gloomy smoke-clouds spired aloft; beneath were fagots piled;
And, 'mid the lambent tongues of flame, a holy Martyr smiled;

Coop'd in Inquisitorial cells, pale, squalid figures lay,
Whose eyes had never bless'd God's sun for many a countless day;
While implements of torture dire were scatter'd on the ground,
And, garb'd in white Religion's robes, demoniac judges frown'd.

III.

Sadly, from latticed convent grey, the hooded Nun look'd out
On luxury, life, and liberty, by young Spring strewn about;
In thought she saw her father's hall, at quiet evening close;
And a bonnet, with its snow-white plume, amid the greening boughs;
Where, with his greyhound in its leash, beside the trysting well,
Her secret lover wont to wait, his burning vows to tell.

IV.

There sages stood with earthward eyes; upon each reverend face,
Sorrow and shame were sadly blent with apostolic grace;

They saw what they had seen of yore, yea perish'd to gainsay,
The swinish herd by ignorance to error led astray;
Men, by false doctrines dazzled, quite forsaking God and Truth,
And grey Experience hooted down by theorising youth.

V.

There scowl'd the proud old barons brave, a thousand fields that won,
Indignant that their high-drawn blood should to the dregs have run;
Scornfully they pointed to the past—to think that all in vain
The life-tide of our patriot hosts had crimson'd hill and plain;
That clad in steel, from head to heel, they made their desperate stand,
Triumphant broke the Papal yoke, and freed a groaning land.

VI.

Then saw I banners on the breeze—and, as their lengths unroll'd
Upon the breath of Blasphemy, mysterious threats they told:

In Liberality's right hand Sedition's scrolls were
borne;
Fierce drunken crowds surrounding her, who
laugh'd Suspense to scorn;
Over Religion's shrines I saw Destruction's plough-
share driven;
The hosts of Hell reconquering Earth, and man
denying Heaven!

VII.

To that poor country, woe—woe—woe! where
Commoner and Peer
Lay down what valour wrung from Fraud, from
ignominious fear;
Give in to Error's harlotry, to smooth her rebel
frown;
Pen up the wolf-cub with the lamb, and bid them
both lie down;
Betray Religion's tower and trench to sacerdotal
Sin,
And turn the key in Freedom's gate, that slaves
may enter in!

VIII.

Through all, I heard a warning voice, and mourn-
fully it said—
"In vain have Sages ponder'd, and in vain have
Martyrs bled;

In vain have seas of patriot blood to Freedom's
cause been given,
Since still man thinks that hellward paths can
e'er lead up to Heaven;
And clouds of ignorance in vain been scatter'd
from his sight,
When the base fiend Expediency o'ercomes the
seraph Right!"

STANZAS FOR

THE BURNS FESTIVAL.

I.

STIR the beal-fire, wave the banner,
Bid the thundering cannon sound,
Rend the skies with acclamation,
Stun the woods and waters round,
Till the echoes of our gathering
Turn the world's admiring gaze
To this act of duteous homage
Scotland to her Poet pays.
Fill the banks and braes with music,
Be it loud and low by turns—
That we owe the deathless glory,
This the hapless fate of Burns.

II.

Born within the lowly cottage
To a destiny obscure,
Doom'd through youth's exulting spring-time
But to labour and endure—
Yet Despair he elbow'd from him;
Nature breath'd with holy joy,
In the hues of morn and evening,
On the eyelids of the boy;
And his country's Genius bound him
Laurels for his sunburnt brow,
When inspired and proud she found him,
Like Elisha, at the plough.

III.

On, exulting in his magic,
Swept the gifted peasant on—
Though his feet were on the greensward,
Light from Heaven around him shone;
At his conjuration, demons
Issued from their darkness drear;
Hovering round on silver pinions,
Angels stoop'd his songs to hear;
Bow'd the Passions to his bidding,
Terror gaunt, and Pity calm;
Like the organ pour'd his thunder,
Like the lute his fairy psalm.

IV.

Lo ! when clover-swathes lay round him,
Or his feet the furrow press'd,
He could mourn the sever'd daisy,
Or the mouse's ruin'd nest;
Woven of gloom and glory, visions
Haunting throng'd his twilight hour;
Birds enthrall'd him with sweet music,
Tempests with their tones of power;
Eagle-wing'd, his mounting spirit
Custom's rusty fetters spurn'd;
Tasso-like, for Jean he melted,
Wallace-like, for Scotland burn'd!

V.

Scotland!—dear to him was Scotland,
In her sons and in her daughters,
In her Highlands, Lowlands, Islands,
Regal woods, and rushing waters;
In the glory of her story,
When her tartans fired the field,—
Scotland! oft betray'd—beleaguer'd—
Scotland! never known to yield!
Dear to him her Doric language,
Thrill'd his heart-strings at her name;
And he left her more than rubies,
In the riches of his fame.

VI.

Sons of England!—sons of Erin!
Ye who journeying from afar,
Throng with us the shire of Coila,
Led by Burns's guiding-star—
Proud we greet you—ye will join us,
As, on this triumphant day,
To the champions of his genius
Grateful thanks we duly pay—
Currie—Chambers—Lockhart—Wilson—
Carlyle—who his bones to save
From the wolfish fiend, Detraction,
Couch'd like lions round his grave.

VII.

Daughter of the Poet's mother!
Here we hail thee with delight;
Shower'd be every earthly blessing
On thy locks of silver white!—
Sons of Burns, a hearty welcome,
Welcome home from India's strand,
To a heart-loved land far dearer,
Since your glorious Father's land!—
Words are worthless—look around you—
Labour'd tomes far less could say
To the sons of such a father,
Than the sight of such a day!

VIII.

Judge not ye, whose thoughts are fingers,
Of the hands that witch the lyre—
Greenland has its mountain icebergs,
Ætna has its heart of fire;
Calculation has its plummet;
Self-control its iron rules;
Genius has its sparkling fountains;
Dulness has its stagnant pools;
Like a halcyon on the waters,
Burns's chart disdain'd a plan—
In his soarings he was Heavenly,
In his sinkings he was man.

IX.

As the sun from out the orient
Pours a wider, warmer light,
Till he floods both earth and ocean,
Blazing from the zenith's height;
So the glory of our Poet,
In its deathless power serene,
Shines, as rolling time advances,
Warmer felt, and wider seen:
First Doon's banks and braes contain'd it,
Then his country form'd its span;
Now the wide world is its empire,
And its throne the heart of man.

X.

Home returning, each will carry
Proud remembrance of this day,
When exulted Scotland's bosom
Homage to her Bard to pay;—
When our jubilee to brighten,
Eglinton with Wilson vied,
Wealth's regards and Rank's distinctions
For the season set aside;
And the peasant, peer, and poet,
Each put forth an equal claim,
For the twining of his laurel
In the wreath of Burns's fame!

STANZAS,

WRITTEN AFTER THE FUNERAL OF ADMIRAL SIR DAVID MILNE, G.C.B.

I.

ANOTHER, yet another! year by year
As time progresses with resistless sweep,
Sever'd from life, the patriots disappear,
Who bore St George's standards o'er the deep:

II.

Heroic men, whose decks were Britain's trust,
When banded Europe scowl'd around in gloom;
Nor least, though latest Thou, whose honour'd dust
Our steps this day have follow'd to the tomb.

III.

Yet, gallant Milne, what more could'st thou desire,
Replete in fame, in years, and honour, save
To wrap thy sea-cloak round thee, and expire,
Where thou had'st lived in glory, on the wave?

IV.

From boyhood to thy death-day, 'mid the scenes
Where love is garner'd, or the brave have striven,
With scarce a breathing-time that intervenes,
Thy life was to our country's service given.

V.

A British sailor! 'twas thy proud delight
Up glory's rugged pathway to aspire;
Ready in council, resolute in fight,
And Spartan coolness temper'd Roman fire!

VI.

Yes; sixty years have pass'd, since, in thy prime,
Plunging from off the shatter'd Blanche, o'erboard
Amid the moonlight waves, 'twas thine to climb
La Pique's torn side, and take the Frenchman's sword.

VII.

And scarcely less remote that midnight dread,
Or venturous less that daring, when La Seine
Dismay'd, dismasted, cumber'd with her dead,
Struck to the ship she fled—and fought in vain.

VIII.

And veterans now are all, who, young in heart,
Burn'd as they heard, how o'er the watery way,
Compell'd to fight, yet eager to depart,
The Vengeance battled through the livelong day—

IX.

Battled with thee, who, steadfast on her track,
Not to be shaken off, untiring bent;
And how awhile the fire from each grew slack,
The shatter'd masts to splice, and riggings rent;

X.

And how, at dawn, the conflict was renewed,
Muzzle to muzzle, almost hand to hand,
Till useless on the wave, and carnage-strew'd,
The foe lay wreck'd on St Domingo's strand;

XI.

And how huzza'd his brave triumphant crew,
And how the hero burn'd within his eye,
When Milne beheld upon the staff, where flew
The tricolor, the flag of Britain fly!

XII.

And yet once more thy country calls!—beneath
The towers and demi-lune of dark Algiers
The Impregnable is anchor'd, in the teeth
Of bomb-proof batteries, frowning, tiers on tiers.

XIII.

Another day of triumph for the right—
Of laurels fresh for Exmouth and for thee—
When Afric's Demon, palsied at the sight
Of Europe's Angel, bade the slave go free!

XIV.

But when away War's fiery storms had burn'd,
And Peace regladden'd Earth with skies of blue,
Thy sword into the pruning-hook was turn'd,
And Cæsar into Cincinnatus grew.

XV.

The poor's protector, the unbiass'd judge,
'Twas thine with warm unwearied zeal to lend
Time to each duty's call, without a grudge—
The Christian, and the Patriot, and the Friend.

XVI.

Farewell! 'tis dust to dust within the grave;
But while one heart beats high to Scotland's fame,
Best of the good, and bravest of the brave,
The name of Milne shall be an honour'd name.

SONG,

FOR THE

DINNER GIVEN TO THE EARL OF DALHOUSIE AT EDINBURGH, 14th SEPTEMBER 1847, BEFORE HIS PROCEEDING TO INDIA AS GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

I.

LONG, long ere the thistle was twined with the rose,
And the firmest of friends now were fiercest of foes,
The flag of Dalwolsey aye foremost was seen;
Through the night of oppression it glitter'd afar,
To the patriot's eye 'twas a ne'er-setting star,
And with Bruce and with Wallace it flash'd thro' the fray
When "Freedom or Death" was the shout of the day,
For the thistle of Scotland shall ever be green!

II.

A long line of chieftains! from father to son,
They lived for their country—their purpose was one—
In heart they were fearless—in hand they were clean;
From the hero of yore, who, in Gorton's grim caves,
Kept watch with the band who disdain'd to be slaves,
Down to him with the Hopetoun and Lynedoch that vied,
Who should shine like a twin star by Wellington's side,
That the thistle of Scotland might ever be green!

III.

Then a bumper to him in whose bosom combine
All the virtues that proudly ennoble his line,
As dear to his country, as stanch to his Queen!
Nor less that Dalhousie a patriot we find,
Whose field is the senate, whose sword is the mind,
And whose object the strife of the world to compose,
That the shamrock may bloom by the side of the rose,
And the thistle of Scotland for ever be green!

IV.

It is not alone for his bearing and birth,
It is not alone for his wisdom and worth,
At this board that our good and our noble convene.
But a faith in the blessings which India may draw
From science, from commerce, religion and law;
And that all who obey Britain's sceptre may see
That knowledge is power—that the truth makes us free:
For rose, thistle, and shamrock, shall ever be green!

V.

A hail and farewell! it is pledged to the brim,
And drain'd to the bottom in honour of him
Who a glory to Scotland shall be and hath been:
Untired in the cause of his country and crown,
May his path be a long one of spotless renown;
Till the course nobly rounded, the goal proudly won,
Fame, smiling on Scotland, shall point to her son—
For the thistle—Her thistle!—shall ever be green!

SONNETS.

SONNETS

ON THE SCENERY OF THE ESK.

I.

A MOUNTAIN child, 'mid Pentland's solitudes,
Thou risest, murmuring Esk, and lapsing on,
Between rude banks, o'er rock and mossy stone,
Glitterest remote, where seldom step intrudes;
Nor unrenowned, as, with an ampler tide,
Thou windest through the glens of Woodhouselee,
Where 'mid the song of bird, the hum of bee,
With soft Arcadian pictures clothed thy side
The pastoral Ramsay.[1] Lofty woods embower
Thy rocky bed 'mid Roslin's crannies deep,
While proud on high time-hallowed ruins peep
Of castle and chapelle; yea, to this hour
Grey Hawthornden smiles downward from its steep,
To tell of Drummond's poesy's spring flower.

II.

Nor lovelier to the bard's enamoured gaze,
Winded Italian Mincio o'er its bed,
By whispering reeds o'erhung,[2] when calmly led
To meditate what rural life displays;
Trees statelier do not canopy with gloom
The brooks of Valombrosa;[3] nor do flowers,
Beneath Ausonia's sky that seldom lowers,
Empurple deep-dyed Brenta's[4] banks with bloom
Fairer than thine at sweet Lasswade: so bright
Thou gleam'st, a mirror for the cooing dove,
That sidelong eyes its purpling form with love
Well pleased; 'mid blossomy brakes, with bosom light,
All day the linnet carols; and, from grove,
The blackbird sings to thee at fall of night.

III.

Down from the old oak forests of Dalkeith,
Where majesty surrounds a ducal home,[5]
Between fresh pastures gleaming thou dost come,
Bush, scaur, and rock, and hazelly shaw beneath,
Till, greeting thee from slopes of orchard ground,
Towers Inveresk with its proud villas fair,[6]
Scotland's Montpelier, for salubrious air,
And beauteous prospect wide and far renowned.
What else could be, since thou, with winding tide
Below dost ripple pleasantly, thy green
And osiered banks outspread, where frequent seen,
The browsing heifer shows her dappled side,
And 'mid the bloom-bright furze are oft descried
Anglers, that patient o'er thy mirror lean?

IV.

DELIGHTFUL 'tis, and soothing sweet, at eve,
When sunlight like a dream hath passed away
O'er Pentland's far-off peaks, and shades of grey
Around the landscape enviously weave,—
To saunter o'er this high walk canopied
With scented hawthorn, while the trellised bowers
Are rich with rose and honeysuckle flowers;
And gaze o'er plains and woods outstretching wide
Till bounded by the Morphoot's heights of blue,
That range along the low south-west afar;
And thee, translucent Esk, with face of blue;
While, as enamoured, evening's first fair star
Looks on thy pool its loveliness to view.

V.

A BEECH-TREE o'er the mill-stream spreads its boughs,
In many an eddy whirls the wave beneath ;
From Stony-bank the west wind's perfumed breath
Sighs past—'tis Summer's gentle evening close :
Smooth Esk, above thy tide the midges weave,
Mixing and meeting oft, their fairy dance ;
While o'er the crown of Arthur's Seat a glance
Of crimson plays—the sunshine's glorious leave ;
Except the blackbird from the dim Shire Wood,[7]
All else is still. So passes human life
From us away—a dream within a dream :
Ah ! where are they, who with me, by this stream,
Roamed ere this world was known as one of strife ?
Comes not an answer from the solitude !

VI.

Leaning upon the time-worn parapet
Of this old Roman bridge,[8] that to the bay
Of Forth hath seen thee, Esk, gliding away
From age to age, and spans thee gliding yet,—
Before me I behold thy sea-most town,
Yclept in Saxon Chronicles Eske-mouthe,
Its venerable roofs—its spire uncouth—
And Pinkie's field of sorrowful renown.
Scenes of my childhood, manhood, and decline—
Scenes that my sorrows and my joys have known,
Ye saw my birth, and be my dust your own,
When, as these waters mingle with the sea,
To look upon the light no more is mine,
And time is swallowed in eternity!

MOONLIGHT CHURCHYARD.

To die and go we know not whither.
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot.
SHAKSPEARE.

ROUND thee, pure Moon, a ring of snowy clouds
Hover, like children round their mother dear
In silence and in joy, for ever near
The footsteps of her love. Within their shrouds,
Lonely, the slumbering dead encompass me!
Thy silver beams the mouldering abbey flout;
Black rails, memorial stones, are strew'd about;
And the leaves rustle on the holly tree.
Shadows mark out the undulating graves;
Tranquilly, tranquilly the departed lie!—
Time is an ocean, and mankind the waves
That reach the dim shores of Eternity;
Death strikes; and Silence, 'mid the evening gloom,
Sits spectre-like, the guardian of the tomb!

TO WORDSWORTH.

WORDSWORTH, I envy thee, that from the strife
Far distant, and the turmoil of mankind,
Thou hold'st communion with the eternal mind
Of Nature, leading an unblemish'd life.
What have the bards of other realms and years
Fabled of innocence or golden age,
But, graven on the tablet of thy page,
And of thy life, in majesty appears?
What marvel that the men of cities, they
Whose fate or choice compels them to endure
The sight of things unholy or impure,
Feel not the moonlight softness of thy lay?
But thou hast fought—hast conquer'd, and decay
Flies far from thee, whose great reward is sure!

TO THE MUSE OF MILTON.

Far from this visible diurnal sphere,
Immortal Spirit, it was thine to stray,
And, bending towards the sun thy proud career,
Dip thy white plumage in the font of day;
Time, marvelling at thy course, beheld thee leave
His confines—overlook, with steadfast eye,
The ungirdled regions of Eternity—
And through the waste wide Empyrean cleave—
Darting with sheer descent the caves amid
Of Night chaotic, downwards to the abyss
Of Death and Darkness, where the Furies hiss,
And Hope from wretched souls is ever hid;—
Heaven, Hell, and Earth thy theme—a scene of bliss
The last, ere Sin the Elysian charm undid.

RURAL SCENERY.

(LARBERT, STIRLINGSHIRE.)

RECEDED hills afar of softened blue,
Tall bowering trees, thro' which the sunbeams shoot
Down to the waveless lake, birds never mute,
And wild-flowers all around of every hue—
Sure 'tis a lovely scene. There, knee-deep stand,
Safe from the fierce sun, the o'ershadowed kine,
And, to the left, where cultured fields expand,
'Mid tufts of scented thorn the sheep recline.
Lone quiet farmsteads, haunts that ever please,
O how inviting to the traveller's eye
Ye rise on yonder uplands, 'mid your trees
Of shade and shelter! Every sound from these
Is eloquent of peace, in earth and sky,
And pastoral beauty, and Arcadian ease.

CRICHTON CHAPEL.

How like an image of repose it looks,
That ancient, holy, and sequestered pile!
Silence abides in each tree-shaded aisle,
And on the grey spire caw the hermit rooks:
So absent is the stamp of modern days,
That in the quaint carved oak, and oriel stained
With saintly legend, to Reflection's gaze
The star of Eld seems not yet to have waned.
At pensive eventide, when streams the West
On moss-greened pediment, and tombstone grey,
And spectral Silence pointeth to Decay,
How preacheth Wisdom to the conscious breast,
Saying, "Each foot that roameth here shall rest:"
To God and Heaven, Death is the only way!

WINTER.

I.

DAYBREAK.

SLOW clear away the misty shades of morn,
As sings the Redbreast on the window-sill;
Fade the last stars; the air is stern and still;
And lo! bright frost-work on the leafless thorn.
Why, Day-god, why so late? the tardy heaven
Brightens; and, screaming downwards to the shore
Of the waste sea, the dim-seen gulls pass o'er,
A scatter'd crowd, by natural impulse driven
Home to their element. All yesternight
From spongy ragged clouds pour'd down the rain,
And, in the wind gusts, on the window pane
Rattled aloud; but now the sky grows bright:
Winter! since thou must govern us again,
O, take not in fierce tyrannies delight.

II.

SNOW-STORM.

How gloom the clouds! quite stifled is the ray,
Which from the conquer'd sun would vainly shoot
Through the blank storm; and, though the winds be
mute,
Lo! down the whitening deluge finds its way:
Look up!—a thousand thousand fairy motes
Come dancing downwards, onwards, sideways whirl'd,
Like flecks of down, or apple-blossoms curl'd
By nipping winds. See how in ether floats
The light-wing'd mass—then, mantling o'er the field,
Changes at once the landscape, chokes the rill,
Hoaries with white the lately verdant hill,
And silvers earth. All to thine influence yield,
Stern conqueror of blithe Autumn: yearly still
Of thee, the dread avatar is reveal'd.

III.

CLEAR FROST.

'Tis noon, the heaven is clear without a cloud;
And, on the masses of untrodden snow,
The inefficient sunbeams glance and glow:
Still is the mountain swathed in its white shroud:
But look along the lake!—hark to the hum
Of mingling crowds!—in graceful curves how swings
The air-poised skater—Mercury without wings!—
Rings the wide ice, a murmur never dumb;
While over all, in fits harmonious, come
The dulcet tones which Music landward flings.
There moves the ermined fair, with timid toe,
Half-pain'd, half-pleased. Yes! all is joy and mirth,
As if, though Frost could subjugate mean earth,
He had no chains to bind the spirit's flow.

IV.

MOONLIGHT.

Behold the mountain peaks how sharply lined
Against the cloudless orient! while, serene,
The silver Moon, majestic as a queen,
Walks 'mid thin stars, whose lustre has declined.
There is no breath of wind abroad: the trees
Sleep in their stilly leaflessness; while, lost
In the pale, sparkling labyrinths of frost,
The wide world seems to slumber, and to freeze.
'Tis like enchanted fairyland! A chill
Steals o'er the heart, as, gazing thus on night,
Life from our lower world seems pass'd away;
And, in the witchery of the faint moonlight,
Silence comes down to hold perpetual sway;—
So breathless is the scene—so hush'd—so still!

V.

CHANGE.

O ! SWEETLY beautiful it is to mark
The virgin vernal Snow-drop, lifting up,
Meek as a nun, the whiteness of its cup
From earth's dead bosom, desolate and dark !
Glorious is Summer, with its rich array
Of blossom'd greenery, perfume-glowing bowers,
Blue skies, and balmy airs, and fruits, and flowers,
Bright sunshine, singing birds, and endless day !
Nor glorious less brown Autumn's witchery,
As by her golden trees Pomona sits,
And Ceres, as she wanders, hears by fits
The reapers' chant, beneath the mellowing sky !
But thy blasts, Winter, hymn a moral lay,
And, mocking Earth, bid Man's thoughts point on high.

THE SCOTTISH SABBATH.

Sweet day! so calm, so pure, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky!
HERBERT.

I.

After a week of restless care and coil,
How sweet unspeakably it is to wake,
And see, in sunshine, thro' the lattice break
The Sabbath morn's serene and saintly smile!
To hallowed quiet human stir is hushed;
'Twould almost seem that the external world
Felt God's command, and that the sea-waves curled
More blandly, making music as they rushed.
The flowers breathe fragrance; from the summer fields
Hark to the small birds singing, singing on
As 'twere an endless anthem to the throne
Of Nature for the boundless stores she yields:
Yea! to the Power that shelters and that shields,
All living things mute adoration own.

II.

If Earth hath aught that speaks to us of Heaven,
'Tis when, within some lone and leafy dell,
Solemn and slow we list the Sabbath bell,
On Music's wings, thro' the clear ether driven :—
Say not the sounds aloud—"O men, 'twere well
Hither to come ; walk not in sins unshriven ;
Haste to this temple ; tidings ye shall hear,
Ye who are sorrowful and sick in soul,
Your doubts to chase, your downcastness to cheer,
To bind affliction's wounds, and make you whole :
Hither—come hither ; though, with Tyrian dye,
Guilt hath polluted you, yet, white as snow,
Cleansed by the streams that from this altar flow,
Home ye shall pass to meet your Maker's eye ?"

III.

Soother of life, physician of all ail,
Thou, more than reputation, wealth, or power,
In the soul's garden the most glorious flower,
Earth's link to Heaven, Religion thee I hail!
Than Luxury's domes, where thou art oft forgot,
Life's aim and object quite misunderstood,
With thee how far more blest the lowliest cot,
The coarsest raiment, and the simplest food!
O! may not with the Heavenly, holy calm
Of Sabbath, from our hearts thine influence glide;
But, thro' Earth's pilgrimage, whate'er betide,
May o'er our path thy sweets descend like balm;
Faith telling that the Almighty light, "I Am,"
Is ever through Sin's labyrinth our guide.

IV.

FALLEN hath our lot on days of pleasant calm,
How different from the stormy times of yore
When prayer was broken by the cannon's roar,
And death-shrieks mingled with the choral psalm !
In sacred as in civil rights, we now
Are Freedom's children : not in doubt and fear,
But with blest confidence, in noonday clear,
As fitliest deems the heart, the knee we bow :
Soon be it so with all ! may Christian light
Diffusing mental day from zone to zone,
Rescue lorn lands from Superstition's blight,
Of Earth an Eden make, and reign alone ;
Then Man shall loathe the wrong, and choose the right,
Remorse and moral blindness be unknown.

V.

On shores far foreign, or remoter seas,
How doth poor Scotland's wanderer hail thy ray,
Blest Sabbath ! and with "joy of woe" survey
In thought his native dwelling 'mid its trees—
And childhood's haunts—and faces well-beloved—
Friends of his soul by distance made more dear !
Oh ! as fond Memory scans them with a tear,
By Manhood be it shed—and unreproved :
He thinks of times—times ne'er to come again—
Sweet times, when to the old kirk, hand in hand,
With those he loved in his far Fatherland
He wont on Sabbath morn to cross the plain !
Tell him, Religion, and 'twill soothe his pain,
All yet shall meet on Heaven's eternal strand.

VI.

TWILIGHT'S grey shades are gathering o'er the dell,
In the red west the sun hath shut his eye,
The stars are gathering in the conscious sky,
As, with a solemn sound, the curfew bell
Tolls thro' the breezeless air, as 'twere farewell
To God's appointed day of sanctity.
Scotland, I glory that throughout thy bounds
(And O ! whilst holy canst thou be unblest ?)
Each Sabbath is a jubilee of rest,
And prayer and praise almost the only sounds.
Richer and prouder other lands may be ;
But, while the world endures, be this thy boast,
(A worthy one) that sunshine gilds no coast
Where Heaven is served more purely than in thee.

NOTES TO SONNETS.

1.

AMID these scenes the *locale* of Ramsay's inimitable *Gentle Shepherd* has been placed, though different writers dispute as to the exact whereabouts. "Habbie's How" has, however, been the most popular as a resort for summer festivity, and still continues to be the scene o many a blithesome *fête-champêtre*. So thoroughly has the bard struck the heart of Scotland in this pastoral drama, that, like the verses of Tasso with the Italians, its couplets have passed into adages with its people.

2.

By whispering reeds o'erhung.—P. 22.

Hic virides tenera prætexit arundine ripas
Mincius. *Mel. Bucolic,* vii.

3.

The brooks of Valombrosa.—P. 22.

Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Valombrosa.—*Paradise Lost.*

4.

Empurple deep-dyed Brenta.—P. 22.

Gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta.
Childe Harold, c. iv.

5.

Where majesty surrounds a ducal home.—P. 23.

In looking on the modern version of "The Castle of Dalcaeth," it should be remembered that it has been successively the home of "the gallant Grahames"—of the Douglas of Otterburn—of the Regent Morton—of General Monk— of Anne,

duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth—and of the patriot Duke Henry, the friend of Pitt and Melville.

6.

Inveresk with its proud villas fair.—P. 23.

The patrician village of Inveresk is beautifully situated on a little hill, forming a gentle curve along the northern bank of the Esk—orchards, and gardens with terraces, stretching from behind the mansions down to the slip of pasture ground which borders the river. From the beauty of its site, and the amenity of its climate, Inveresk obtained of yore the appellation of the *Montpelier* of Scotland. At the western extremity of the village stood the venerable church of St Michael the Archangel, which was ruthlessly demolished at the beginning of the present century, to be supplanted by a modern building in the most commonplace taste. The house in which the Regent Randolph died, and which stood near the east port of Musselburgh, was also swept away at the same period of barbarous innovation.

7.

Except the blackbird from the dim Shire Wood.—P. 25.

Of the once extensive Shire Wood, in whose shade were a hundred *stents* or grazings for a hundred cows, only a few trees now remain. It extended from the Shire Mill on the south—with its hereditary miller—northwards to the hollow immediately below Mortonhall—the Esk having of old run almost in a line from where the mill-dam enters it to that spot. From gradually bending towards Inveresk, upwards of thirty acres have been gradually transferred to the south banks of the river. When a boy, I remember the town herd at early morn sounding his horn to collect and conduct the cows of the burgesses to these pastures. Nothing of the common now remains: all is under the plough.

8.

The time-worn parapet
Of this old Roman bridge.—P. 26.

The venerable bridge over the Esk at Musselburgh is believed to be of Roman construction; but no traces of its date are extant. An ancient local tax for keeping it in repair is still in force, under the name of the *gentes* custom.

Three noted fields of battle are within view of Inveresk—Pinkie, Carberry, and Prestonpans.

POEMS IN REFERENCE TO CHILDHOOD.

STANZAS ON AN INFANT.

Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory, do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

WORDSWORTH.

I.

The rose-bud, blushing through the morning's tears,
The primrose, rising from the wintry waste,
The snow-drop, or the violet, that appears
Like nun within the myrtle's shadow placed,
Wear not a smile like thine, nor look so chaste,
Fair innocent! that, from thy mother's knee,
As yet by Earth's despoilment undefaced,
Smil'st, and unheeding what the Fates decree,
Dream'st not of hapless days, that yet will frown on thee!

II.

Say, o'er thy little frame when slumbers steal,
And watch above thy cradle seraphs keep,
Do they, in love, futurity reveal,
That thus thou sweetly smilest in thy sleep?

Thy pure blue eyes were sure ne'er form'd to weep,
Those little lips to breathe the sighs of woe ;—
Alas ! in life it may be thine to steep
Thy senses in nepenthe, glad if so
Thy memory may the dreams of wretchedness forego.

III.

For passion is a tyrant fierce and wild,
Leading the thoughts from Virtue's pure career ;
And spirits, in their natures calm and mild,
Are duped by Flattery, or subdued by Fear ;
Love, with its promise to illume and cheer
The path of life, oft lures us to betray ;
And hopes that, robed in iris hues, appear
When the heart swells in Youth's exulting day,
Dreaming sweet dreams alone, in darkness melt away !

IV.

Sweet child, thy artlessness and innocence
Kindle deep thought, and cause my heart to bleed ;
For even to the best the Fates dispense
Sorrow and pain, nor are the happiest freed
From ills, that make existence dark indeed.
Sadness doth of its lustre rob the eye ;
And those who ever, in the hour of need,
To mitigate our griefs were kindly nigh,
Like shot stars, one by one, all disappear and die !

V.

Earth is at best a heritage of grief,
But O! fair cherub, may its calm be thine;
May Virtue be thy solace and relief,
When Pleasure on thy lot disdains to shine!
There was a time, when being was divine,
No sin, no sorrow—paradise the scene;
But man was prone to error, and his line
In frailty like their sire have ever been:
How happy might'st thou be, were Eden's bowers
still green!

VI.

Ah! may I guess, when years have o'er thy head
Their passage wing'd, maturity thine own,
How may on earth thy pilgrimage be led?
Shall public cares, or privacy alone,
Thy life engage? or shall thy lot be thrown
Where timbrel, horn, and martial drum inspire?
Or shalt thou, softened to a holier tone,
Draw down aërial spirits to thy lyre,
And call upon the muse to arm thy words with fire?

VII.

Thy flaxen ringlets, and thy deep blue eyes,
Bring to my mind the little God of Love;
The last outvie the azure of the skies,
The first are like the clouds that float above

The Spring's descending sun. The boy whom Jove
Rapt from the earth—fair Ganymede—to dwell
Above the realms where Care has wing to rove,
Thy cherub features may betoken well;
Or, if the one excell'd, perchance *thou* might'st excel.

VIII.

Even now, begirt with utter helplessness,
'Tis hard to think, as on thy form I gaze,
(Experience makes me marvel not the less,)
That thou to busy man shalt rise, and raise
Thyself, mayhap, a nation's pride, and praise:
'Tis hard to let the truth my mind employ,
That he, who kept the world in wild amaze,
That Cæsar in the cradle lay—a boy,
Soothed by a nurse's kiss, delighted with a toy!

IX.

That once the mighty Newton was like thee;
The awful Milton, who on Heaven did look,
Listening the councils of Eternity;
And matchless Shakspeare, who, undaunted, took
From Nature's shrinking hand her secret book,
And page by page the wondrous tome explored;
The fearless Sidney; the adventurous Cook;
Howard, who mercy for mankind implored;
And France's despot Chief, whose heart lay in his sword!

X.

How doth the wretch, when life is dull and black,
Pray that he were, pure innocent, like thee!
And that again the guileless days were back,
When Childhood leant against a parent's knee!
'Tis meet that Sin should suffer—it must be:
To such as at the shrine of Virtue mock,
Remorse is what the righteous Fates decree:
On conquest bent, Sennacherib awoke;
But Heaven had o'er his camp breathed death in the Siroc.

XI.

The unrelenting tyrant, who, unmoved,
Lays for a sweet and smiling land his snares,
Whose callous, unimpassion'd heart hath proved
Beyond the impulse of a mother's prayers,
Though not for Beauty's tearful eye he cares,
A tyrant among tyrants he must be—
A Herod with a Hydra soul, who dares
To spill the blood of innocent, like thee,
All smiling in his face, and from a parent's knee!

XII.

Adieu! fair infant; be it thine to prove
The joy, of which an earnest thou wert sent;
And, in thy riper years, with looks of love,
Repay thy mother for the hours she spent
In fondness o'er thy cradle; thou wert meant

To be her solace in declining years;
Raise up the mind, with age and sorrow bent;
Assuage with filial care a parent's fears,
Awake her heart to joy, and wipe away her tears!

THE EARLY LOST.

I.

FARE-THEE-WELL, fair flower, that opening
To the genial smile of day,
By the storm-blast, in a twinkling,
From our sight wert swept away!
Never more thy voice shall cheer us,
Never more thy form be seen,
In our solitude we startle
But to think that thou hast been!

II.

Now the sun illumes our dwelling,
Sings the bird, and buds the tree;
Nature starts as from her slumber,
But no wakening rouseth thee!
Never more for thee the morning
Shall its golden gates unfold;
Past alike are joy and sorrow,
Summer's heat and winter's cold.

III.

Vainly would our tears restore thee—
Thou art now a thing of yore.
Waves, that lull the ear with music,
Melt for ever on the shore;
Yet at eve, when sings the tame bird,
By thy hand once duly fed,
Seem its notes not nature's wailing
Over thee, the early dead?

IV.

Softly, softly gleam'd thy ringlets,
Braided in their auburn hue;
Keenly, keenly lustre darted
From thine eyes of floating blue;
Now the mould lies scatter'd o'er thee,
And, with deep and dirge-like tone,
Pipes at eve the haunting blackbird,
O'er thy mansion, low and lone.

V.

Dark, anon, shall storms be rolling,
Through the waned autumnal sky,
Winds be raving, waves be roaring,
Sullen deep to deep reply,
Winter shall resume his sceptre
O'er the desolated earth;
But no more wilt thou, like sunlight,
Brighten up our cheerless hearth.

VI.

When around that hearth we gather,
Jocund mirth no more beguiles;
Up we gaze upon thy picture,
Which looks down on us—and smiles;
And we sigh, when, in our chambers,
On the couch our limbs we lay,
That the churchyard grass is waving,
Lonely, o'er thy silent clay!

VII.

Why our mourning? We lament not,
Even although our hearts be riven,
That in being's sunny spring-time,
Thou wert snatch'd from earth to Heaven:
Life to thee was still enchantment,
And 'twas spared thy heart to know,
That the beams of mortal pleasure
Always sink in clouds of woe.

VIII.

Fare-thee-well, then! Time may bring us
Other friends; but none like thee,
Who, in thy peculiar beauty,
Wert, what we no more shall see;
From our ears seraphic music
In thy voice hath died away;
From our eyes a glorious vision
Pass'd, to mingle in the clay!

ADDRESS

TO LITTLE CHILDREN.

I.

Ah, little children! if ye knew
How angel eyes, in love,
Look down upon you from the blue
Of the calm skies above,
Ye would be careful what ye do,
And eager to improve.

II.

A joyous host, a countless band,
In robes of snowy white,
Around the Throne, with harp in hand,
Take ever fresh delight,
Young tender souls to their sweet land
To beckon and invite.

III.

They sorrow o'er you suffering,
  They smooth your couch of sleep,
In danger's hour they succour bring,
  O'er you a watch they keep;
In you, then, 'twere a cruel thing
  To make those blest ones weep.

IV.

Each, like yourself, a little child
  Once walked this earth beneath,
Saw what you see, and talked and smiled,
  Till suddenly came Death,
And churchyard turf was o'er them piled—
  Cold clay—devoid of breath.

V.

But all the good went up to God,
  To dwell with him for aye;
Their road is now a thornless road,
  And bliss is theirs alway;
To golden harps, by Him bestowed,
  They carol night and day.

VI.

Brothers and sisters on that coast
Have met to part no more;
Why then should parents, sorrow-tost,
With sighs and tears deplore?
The lost are not for ever lost—
They are but gone before.

VII.

Then keep your hearts from error free:
Down oft they look on you,
Your thoughts they watch, your ways they see,
And joy when you are true;
To think that ye condemned should be,
Would their high bliss subdue.

VIII.

To little children, who are pure,
In thought, and word, and deed,
And shun what might to ill allure,
The Bible hath decreed
A glorious portion, ever sure,
And help in time of need.

IX.

Of themes befitting simple song,
There surely is no dearth,
If we but cast our eyes along
The Sea—the Air—the Earth;
Nor can the verse be reckoned wrong,
Which wakens harmless mirth.

X.

Man has his seasons, and to each
Congenial thoughts pertain,
And pleasures lie in childhood's reach
That life ne'er knows again;
Keep then your white souls, I beseech,
From guilt's polluting stain.

XI.

Creation's charms then doubly fair
Appear; for all is new,
And, in Romance's morning air,
Like diamonds shines the dew,
Balm loads that air, no cloud of care
Dims the serene of blue.

XII.

Then mar not ye God's gracious plan,
But, furthering his intent,
Grow up from Childhood unto Man,
Through cheerful years, well spent;
So shall life's eve be like its dawn,
Serene and innocent.

ECHOES OF ANTIQUITY.

THE MESSAGE OF SETH.

AN ORIENTAL TRADITION.

I.

PROSTRATE upon his couch of yellow leaves,
Slow-breathing lay the Father of Mankind;
And, as the rising sun through cloudland weaves
Its gold, the glowing past returned to mind,
Days of delight for ever left behind,
In purity's own garments garmented,
Under perennial branches intertwined—
Where fruits and flowers hung temptingly o'erhead,
Eden's blue streams he traced, by bliss ecstatic led.

II.

Before him still, in the far distance seen,
Arose its rampart groves impassable;
Stem behind giant stem, a barrier screen,
Whence even at noonday midnight shadows fell:
Vainly his steps had sought to bid farewell
To scenes so tenderly beloved, although
Living in sight of Heaven made Earth a Hell;
For fitful lightnings, on the turf below,
Spake of the guardian sword aye flickering to and fro—

III.

The fiery sword that, high above the trees,
Flashed awful threatenings from the angel's hand,
Who kept the gates and guarded: Nigh to these,
A hopeless exile, Adam loved to stand
Wistful, or roamed to catch a breeze that fanned
The ambrosial blooms, and wafted perfume thence,
As 'twere sweet tidings from a distant land
No more to be beheld; for Penitence,
However deep it be, brings back not Innocence.

IV.

Thus had it been through weary years, wherein
The primal curse, working its deadly way,
Had reft his vigour, made his cheek grow thin,
Furrowed his brow, and bleached his locks to grey:
A stricken man, now Adam prostrate lay
With sunken eye, and palpitating breath,
Waning like sunlight from the west away;
While tearfully, beside that bed of death,
Propping his father's head, in tenderness hung Seth.

V.

"Seth, dearest Seth," 'twas thus the father said,
"Thou know'st—ah! better none, for thou hast been
A pillow to this else forsaken head,
And made, if love could make, life's desert green—

The dangers I have braved, the ills unseen,
Like nets around my feet; and how the wrath
Of an offended God strewed briars keen,
And thorns, instead of flowers, along my path—
Yet deem not that this Night no hope of Morning hath.

VI.

"On darkness Dawn will break; and, as the gloom
Of something, all unfelt before, downweighs
My spirit, and forth-shadows coming doom,
Telling me this may be my last of days,—
I call to mind the promise sweet (let praise
Be ever His, who from Him hath not thrust
The erring utterly!) again to raise
The penitential prostrate from the dust,
And be the help of all who put in Him their trust.

VII.

"Know then, that day, as sad from Eden's home
Of primal blessedness my steps were bent
Reluctant, through the weary world to roam,
And tears were with the morning's dewdrops blent,
That 'twas even then the Almighty did relent—
Saying, 'Though labour, pain, and peril be
Thy portion, yet a balsam sweet of scent
For man hath been provided, which shall free
From death his doom—yea, gain lost Eden back to thee.

VIII.

"'Although thy disobedience hath brought down
The wrath of justice; and the penalty
Are pangs by sickness brought, and misery's frown,
And toil—and, finally, that thou shalt die;
Yet will I help in thine extremity.
In the mid Garden, as thou know'st, there grows
The Tree of Life, and thence shall preciously,
One day, an oil distil, of power to close
Sin's bleeding wounds, and soothe man's sorrows to repose.'

IX.

"That promise hath been since a star of light,
When stumbled on the mountains dark my feet;
Hath cheered me in the visions of the night,
And made awaking even to labour sweet;
But now I feel the cycle is complete,
And horror weighs my spirit to the ground.
Haste to the guarded portals—now 'tis meet—
And learn if, even for me, may yet be found
That balsam for this else immedicable wound.

X.

"Thine errand to the Angel tell, and he
(Fear not, he knows that edict from the Throne)
Will guide thy footsteps to the Sacred Tree,
Which crowns the Garden's midmost space alone:

Thy father's utmost need to him make known;
And, ere life's pulsing lamp be wasted quite,
Bring back this Oil of Mercy—haste, be gone;
Haste thee, oh haste! for my uncertain sight,
Fitful, now deems it day, and now is quenched in night."

XI.

Seth heard; and like a swift fond bird he flew,
By filial love impelled; yea, lessened dread
Even of the guardian Fiery Angel knew,
And through the flowery plains untiring sped,
And upwards, onwards to the river-head,
Where, high to heaven, the verdant barriers towered
Of Eden; when he sank—o'ercanopied
With sudden lightning, which around him showered,
And in its vivid womb the mid-day sun devoured.

XII.

And in his ear and on his heart was poured,
While there entranced he lay, an answer meet;
And gradually, as Thought came back restored,
Uprising, forth he hied with homeward feet.
Sweet to the world's grey Father, O how sweet,
His coming on the nearest hill-top shone!
For now all feebly of his heart the beat
Returned; and of his voice the faltering tone,
Meeting the listener's ear, scarce made its purpose known.

XIII.

"Beloved father!" thus 'twas through his grief
Impassioned spake the son, "it may not be,
Alas! that, for thy misery's relief,
Wells now the promised balsam from Life's Tree.
And must I say farewell—yea, part with thee?—
Droop not thus all despairing: breath may fail,
And days and years and ages onward flee
Ere that day dawn; but thou its beams shalt hail,
And earth give up its dead, and Life o'er Death prevail.

XIV.

"Astounding are the visions I have seen:
The clouds took shapes, and turned them into trees
And men and mountains; and the lands between
Seemed cities, dun with crowds; and on the seas
Dwelt men, in arks careering with the breeze;
And shepherds drove their flocks along the plain;
And generations, smitten with disease,
Passed to the dust, on which tears fell like rain;
Yet fathers, in their sons, seem'd age grown youth again.

XV.

"And the wide waters rose above the tops
Of the high hills, and all looked desolate—
Sea without shore! Anon appeared the slopes,
Glowing with blossoms, and a group elate

Eying an arch, bright with Earth's future fate,
In heaven; and there were wanderings to and fro;
And, while beneath the multitudes await,
Tables, by God's own finger written, show
The Law by which He wills the world should walk below.

XVI.

"And ever passed before me clouds of change,
Whose figures rose, and brightened, and declined;
And what was now familiar straight grew strange,
And, melting into vapours, left behind
No trace; and, as to silence sank the wind,
Appeared in heaven a beautiful bright star,
Under whose beams an Infant lay reclined;
And all the wheels of nature ceased their jar,
And choiring angels hymned that Presence from afar.

XVII.

"And then, methought, upon a mountain stood
The Tree, from which, as shown to thee, should flow
That Oil of Mercy—but it looked like blood!
And to all quarters of the earth below
It streamed, until the desert ceased to know
Its curse of barrenness; the clouds away
Passed in their darkness from the noon; and lo!
Even backwards flowed that brightness to this day,
And, Father, showed me thee, encircled by its ray:—

XVIII.

"It showed me thee, from whom mankind had birth,
And myriads—countless as the sere leaves blown
From wintry woods—whose places on the earth,
Even from the burning to the icy zone,
Were to their sons' sons utterly unknown,
Awakening to a fresh eternal morn:
Methinks I list that glad Hosannah's tone,
From shore to shore on all the breezes borne!
Then, Father, droop not thus, as utterly forlorn;

XIX.

"A long, long future, freaked with sin and strife,
The generations of the world must know;
But surely from that Tree—the Tree of Life—
A healing for the nations yet will flow,
As God foretold thee."
"Freely then I go,
For steadfast is the Lord his word to keep,"
Said Adam, as his breathing, faint and slow,
Ceased; and, like zephyr dying on the deep,
In hope matured to faith, the First Man fell asleep.

HIPPOCRATES TO THE AMBASSADORS OF ARTAXERXES.

It is recorded that Hippocrates refused an invitation from Artaxerxes, King of Persia, with a promise of every reward and honour he might desire, provided he would repair to his dominions during a season of pestilence. Many doubts have been thrown out regarding the authenticity of the letters said to have passed on the occasion, and which are still extant. In one of these, Hippocrates replies, that "he has food, clothing, and a habitation in his own country; and that it would be unworthy of him to aspire to the wealth and grandeur of the Persians, or to cure barbarians—the enemies of Greece." The consequence is said to have been the threatened vengeance of the enraged king against the inhabitants of Cos, unless they delivered him up; but the islanders, instead of complying, declared their resolution to defend his life and liberty at all hazards, and the affair was dropped.

I.

Return, and tell your Sire, the Persian King,
That dazzling proffers here you vainly bring:
What is the pomp of wealth, the pride of state,
Pages around, and slaves within the gate,
With all the vain magnificent parade
Which floats in Grandeur's showy cavalcade,

To him who daily bends the patient knee
Before the shrine of meek Philosophy,
And strives to fill up Life's contracted span
With kindliest offices to fellow-man?
Sabæan perfumes, robes of Tyrian dye,
And fountain jets that cool the glowing sky—
While music, mirth, and dancing, from the breast
Drive every dream of sorrow and unrest—
May to submission lull luxurious Ease,
And fashion thraldom to what mould you please;
But to the soul determined, yet serene,
Which treasures wisdom from each passing scene,
And scruples never from itself to steal
Soft slumber's hours, to serve the common-weal,
Shorn of their rainbow hues, State's honours fade,
And sink to insignificance and shade!

II.

Tell Artaxerxes that, from day to day,
Even to the rudest hut I bend my way,
Where, save my own, no friendly feet intrude—
Where Poverty keeps watch with Solitude,
And, stretched on pallet low, the sick man lies,
With fever-stricken frame and hollow eyes;
That, while wild phantoms whirl his throbbing brain,
I watch his slumbers, and allay his pain,
A balm to stanch the gushing wound apply,
And wipe Affection's tear from Sorrow's eye.
Up with the sun, to meadows I repair,
And cull each virtuous herb that blossoms there;

For me no hour is idly seen to shine,
Long days of toil, and slumbers brief are mine.

III.

Go—bid your monarch pause, from all apart,
And ask this question of his conscious heart,
At midnight lonely, when are swept aside
The court's bedazzling pageantry and pride—
At midnight when the clouds are dark and deep,
And all the stars sealed up, the world asleep—
If e'er, when mounted on his molten throne,
Beauty, and power, and wealth beneath him shone,
Gems, gold, and garments from a thousand coasts,
All that the earth presents, or ocean boasts—
If e'er when Flattery raised her voice aloud,
And echoing murmurs circled round the crowd,
Far from his spirit fled the fiend Distress,
To leave his heart unmingled happiness—
Ask him if these, the pageants of a king,
Can ever to his thoughts such rapture bring,
As that I feel, when, as I journey on,
The pale youth rises from the wayside stone,
With health-rekindling cheek, and palms outspread,
To call down bliss on my unworthy head,—
As that I feel, when some fond mother shows
Her cradled infant, lovely in repose,
And tells me, that the scion of her heart
Preserved to bless her by my timeous art,
Taught by parental precept, will repair
To lisp my name amid his earliest prayer—

What time for him Jove's temple-doors are thrown
Apart, and Heaven his worship deigns to own—
Grateful, through all life's after years to be,
To one, from lurking death who set him free!

IV.

If such my joys—with praise from every tongue,
Smiles from the old, and greetings from the young,
The warrior's reverence as he courses by,
And gratitude's warm beam from woman's eye—
What else is wanting? That which I enjoy—
The mental calm, which nothing can destroy,
The self-applause, whose strength sustains the soul,
When o'er the Sun of Life the clouds of Sorrow roll.

V.

What wish I more? A cheerful home is mine,
Around whose threshold hangs the clustering vine;
There Contemplation finds a welcome cell,
And dove-eyed Peace, and meek Contentment dwell;
Raiment my country offers, food, and fire,
What more doth Nature crave—should man desire?
And could I leave my country, fair and free,
Green Cos, the glory of the Ægean sea,
Desert the realm of Wisdom and of Worth,
Land of my sires, and region of my birth,
By such unworthy baubles lured to roam,
And make 'mid barbarous hordes my gilded home?
No! tell your sovereign that a freeman I
Was born, and 'mid the free resolve to die!

My skill to lull the tortured into ease,
To salve the wound, and medicate disease,
Were madly used, if, from the free and brave
I turned, and stooped to heal the despot and his slave!

VI.

Thy monarch's rage I nor despise nor dread;
Fall if it must on my devoted head,
Better an honoured, though untimely fate,
Than glory sold for unavailing state:
With sneering lip, O ne'er may scoffer say—
"Hippocrates to Persia slunk away,
For princely gauds his reputation sold,
Shamed his old age, and bartered fame for gold!"
No! rather be it said—"He scorn'd to roam
The world for wealth, and died beloved at home;
His goal of rest was honourably won,
And Greece regards him as a worthy son!"

THE LEGEND OF ST ROSALIE.

I.

Fair art thou, Sicily!—in all his round,
Shines not the sun on lovelier land than thine;
With gorgeous olive groves thy hills are crown'd,
And o'er thy vales the pomegranate and vine
Spread rich in beauty; halcyon seas around
Thy shores breathe freshness, making half divine
An earthly climate; eye hath nowhere seen
Heaven brighter in its blue, earth in its green!

II.

But of these boasts I sing not now—my tale
Is of an ancient pestilence, when the power
Of death hung o'er thee, like a sable veil,
And desolation ruled each awful hour;
When man's heart sank, and woman's cheek grew pale,
And graves were dug in every garden-bower,
And proud Palermo bow'd her spiry head
In silent gloom—a city of the dead!

III.

Hush'd was the voice of traffic on each street;
Within the market-place the grass sprang green;
Friends from each other shrank with hasty feet,
When on the porch the plague's red-cross was seen;
The clocks had long forgotten to repeat
Time's warning hours; and, where had revel been
On days of carnival, with wheels of dread
The dead-cart roll'd, and homes gave out their dead.

IV.

A lurid vapour veil'd the sun from view,
And the winds were not; strangers fled the shore;
Lay in the ports the ship without a crew,
The heat-warp'd fisher-boat and rotting oar;
Wander'd the house-dog masterless, and grew
So fierce with famine, the gaunt looks he wore
Betoken'd madness; broken was each tie
That sweetens life, or links humanity.

V.

Thus week on week crawl'd on, and day by day:
Down to the dreary caverns of the grave,
Pass'd in this harvest-home of death away,
Unmark'd, unmourn'd, the beauteous and the brave,
The white-hair'd sire, and infant of a day;
No funeral had a single follower, save
The hirelings who for wine or booty schemed,
And, while they trod the verge of Hell, blasphemed;

VI.

Till one grey morn, when all was drear and dumb,
Arose, far off, the sound as of a sea,
Or wailing of the wild winds, when they come
To strip the frail leaves from October's tree :
Now nearer—'twas the multitudinous hum
Of human tongues. What could the meaning be ?
The timid and the plague-struck left their beds,
And all the roofs were clad with gazing heads !

VII.

And lo ! a grey-hair'd abbot, in the van
Of a tumultuous, motley, rushing crowd,
Which throng'd around the venerable man,
And scarce a passage for his path allow'd.
Above his head, as if a talisman
Of peace, a long white silken banner flow'd ;
Unsandal'd were his feet, his sackcloth vest
And sable cowl humility confess'd.

VIII.

And in his calm blue eye a mystery shone,
And on his brow a bright intelligence,
As if his soul to happy worlds had flown,
To carry back some gracious message thence ;
Straightway he mounted on a ledge of stone,
'Mid the hush'd crowd glad tidings to dispense,
And stretching forth his thin pale fingers, thus
He spake, in accents clear though tremulous :—

IX.

"As in my solitary cell I lay,
On the dried rushes sprinkled for my bed,
A golden light, as if of sudden day,
Around my darken'd walls effulgence shed;
Upon my knees I sprang, in act to pray,
And, earthward as I shrank in solemn dread,
I heard a silver tongue, which thus began—
'Put away fear, and look to me, O man!

X.

"'Look up to me—my home is Paradise,
Where all is fadeless, shadowless, and grand,
And groves of amaranth in glory rise,
And streams of silver lave a golden strand,
And angels with their white plumes veil their eyes,
As in the presence of the Throne they stand;
Put away fear—to lighten human woe,
Only on messages of love we go.

XI.

"'Yes! I am come the harbinger of good
From God to man; the tear, the suppliant sigh,
While happy hearths were doom'd to solitude
And silence, have ascended to the sky.
Now by His precious name who died on rood,
Health shall once more revisit Sicily—
Again Palermo take her titles old—
The wide world's granary [1]—the shell of gold.' [2]

XII.

" As music melts within the moonlight sea,
So ceased her voice upon the silent air ;
And, looking up, from sudden fear set free,
Behold ! a form, angelically fair,
In robes cerulean mantled to the knee,
Floating in light—a halo round her hair ;
Within her hand she held a branch of palm,
And in her eye dwelt Heaven's eternal calm.

XIII.

" Like honey dripping from the comb, so came
Once more her words—' List to me, do not fear—
No vows of wrath I bring, no words of blame,
This world, where now we are, was once my sphere ;
And all the feelings of the human frame,
And all man's hopes and joys to me were dear ;
Yes ! I was once a denizen of earth,
And in the home of princes had my birth.

XIV.

" ' Each pleasure for my young heart was devised,
My wishes all were with fruition crown'd,
Yet, girt with earthly grandeur, I despised
The gaiety and the giddiness around,
The calm of holy meditation prized,
And seeking solace in religion, found ;
Till wean'd from frality, in abstraction deep,
I held communion with the blest in sleep.

XV.

"'And day by day more spiritual I grew,
And night by night more ravishingly blest;
Scarcely it seem'd 'twas human breath I drew,
For angels stood before my sight confest,
And round my walks in circling glory flew,
And shadow'd with their plumes my couch of rest,
Till, by their high communion purified,
The face of man no more I could abide.

XVI.

"'Twas now my fifteenth summer, and the sun
One morn was shining on the pearly dew,
When, blessing all, yet taking leave of none,
In silence from my palace home I flew—
Flew till my strength was spent, and day was done
Whither, and for what purpose, scarce I knew,
Nor was it ever guess'd; though, since the last
Hour of my life, five centuries have pass'd.

XVII.

"'Cherubs hung round, an angel was my guide,
And, mantled in Elysian reverie,
She bore me up the mount, and at her side,
I woke, o'ershadowed by an olive tree;[8]
There was I stationed thenceforth to abide,
Till time from earth should set my spirit free;
And so, amid the rocks, by foot untrod,
I learn'd to live with nature, and to God.

XVIII.

"'My home was Pelegrino's rocky cell;
The berries of the mountain were my food;
My drink was water from its bubbling well;
My only friends the wild birds of the wood;
Yet found I there a peace, which may not dwell
With man below, except in solitude,
When life's one purpose is to fast and pray;
And with my knees I wore the rock away.

XIX.

"'Celestial minds, believe me, for the woes
Of mortal life have sympathy, and I
To hush Palermo's wailings to repose,
Now bring thee down a message from on high;
Hearken to what I bid thee—and the rose
Of health again shall bloom, the plague shall fly:—
For it is granted me, by Heavenly grace,
To be the guardian of my native place.

XX.

"'Girt with that holy faith which falters not,
Go thou with morning, and, from out the stones,
Which strew the floors of Pelegrino's Grot,
Gather together my unburied bones—[4]
For since my own, a human voice hath not
Broken its calm with penitential moans—
Bear them, with anthems to the Prince of Peace,
Thrice round the city, and the plague shall cease.

XXI.

" 'And then shall pass away the brooding gloom,
Which hid the very face of heaven from view;
Nature once more her course shall reassume,
The fields their verdure, and the sky its blue;
And Faith shall sit upon the sealed-up tomb;
And Time o'er Sorrow shed her healing dew;
And Hope present, in better worlds restored,
The loved—the quickly lost—and long deplored.'[5]

XXII.

" With downcast earnestness my listening ear
Drank in the sounds celestial; as they ceased
I raised mine eyes, in reverential fear,
To gaze upon the Heavenly guest, well pleased;
But she had vanish'd, and the darkness drear
From her abstracted lustre had increased;
And on my couch, within my cell of stone,
Awe-struck I knelt, in darkness and alone!"

XXIII.

Silently, breathlessly, around him stood,
Like men escaped from some tremendous doom
By miracle, the innumerous multitude;
Mid-day had broken upon midnight's gloom;
While, as Despair departed with her brood
Accursed, came Hope each pale face to illume;
And, as the abbot ceased, a long loud shout,
Like thunder, rang Palermo's bounds throughout.

XXIV.

Again, and yet again, that sea of sound
Surged up to heaven, and then the joyous crowd,
With leap, and lock'd embrace, and sudden bound,
Each other hail'd, in gratulation proud;
While some in speechless ecstasy were drown'd,
Others, o'ercome by feeling, wept aloud;
But onward to the mountain, as behoved,
All in one wild delirious tumult moved.

XXV.

Up Pelegrino's rocky sides they clomb,
The old man in the midst, and there, on high,
They found the fair Saint's dwelling-place and tomb—
A yawning cleft that faced the eastern sky;
Entering, 'twas mantled all in twilight gloom;
Which clearing up, 'twas rapture to descry
Upon its floor, amid the rugged stones,
The treasure which they sought for—mouldering bones—

XXVI.

The mouldering bones of sainted Rosalie,
Which there, unnoticed and unknown, had lain,
While spring, through centuries five, had green'd the tree,
And autumn burden'd earth with golden grain;
As they were borne to light, each bent the knee,
Then downwards follow'd to the dim-seen plain
In reverential silence—for the time
Was solemn, and gave birth to thoughts sublime.

XXVII.

Thus, from her trance of darkness, into day
Palermó broke; the bells from every tower
Peal'd joyously; and bands, with streamers gay,
Assembling, waited anxiously the hour
Which was to chase the pestilence away,
And from its dreaded and destructive power
Release a suffering city, and restore
To vacant homes the household gods once more.

XXVIII.

Then, as the vision bade, with chanted hymn,
Thrice round the city march'd they on that morn,
With censers in the daylight burning dim,
And the loud sound of timbrel, harp, and horn;
All eyes were on the abbot, for by him
The relics in a silver urn were borne;[6]
Behind him paced the vestals, vow'd to God,
And freres with robes of white, and feet unshod.

XXIX.

Meanwhile the vapours, dense and stern, away
From the blue concave of the sky withdrew;
Burst forth in radiant loveliness the day,
And stirring all the leaves the light winds blew;
Gamboll'd the flocks; the wild birds caroll'd gay;
Almost it seem'd that nature breathed anew,
And had thrown off the spell, which made her seem
As if bewitch'd by some night-mareish dream.

XXX.

Again the tide of life went rolling on,
And mingling tongues were heard, and hurrying feet;
The clocks again gave out a cheerful tone;
Back to the empty harbours came the fleet;
With corn the long-deserted fields were sown;
And traffic swept the grass from off the street;
Joy re-illumin'd ocean, and its shore;
And man met man in brotherhood once more.

XXXI.

In season due, by grateful hands uprear'd,
On Pelegrino's rugged cliffs a fane,[7]
Rich in its architectural grace, appear'd,
Over the grotto, where so long had lain
The bones of Rosalie—her name revered
May find in Sicily no like again,
For ever to shine forth the brightest star
In her peculiar Calendar by far.

XXXII.

And yearly on that day, when from the powers
Of pestilence Palermo's walls were freed,
The people give to revelry the hours,
And kneel before her imaged form, and feed
The path of her triumphal car with flowers.
Such of a grateful nation is the meed,
Paid for the blasting of Plague's upas-tree,
And such its reverence for St Rosalie!

THE BURDEN OF SION.

THIS Ode, composed by Judas Hallevy bar Samuel, a Spanish Rabbi of the twelfth century, is said to be still recited every year, during the Fast observed in commemoration of the Destruction of Jerusalem. The versifier has been much indebted to a very literal translation, from the original necessarily obscure Spanish of the Rabbi, into excellent French, by Joseph Mainzer, Esq., a gentleman to whom the sacred music of this country is under great and manifold obligations.

CAPTIVE and sorrow-pale, the mournful lot
Say, hast thou, Sion, of thy sons forgot?
Hast thou forgot the innocent flocks, that lay
Prone on thy sunny banks, or frisk'd in play
Amid thy lilied meadows? Wilt thou turn
A deaf ear to thy supplicants, who mourn
Downcast in earth's far corners? Unto thee
Wildly they turn in their lone misery;
For wheresoe'er they rush in their despair,
The pitiless Destroyer still is there!

Eden of earth! despisest thou the sighs
From the slave's heart that rise
To thee, amid his fetters—who can dare
Still to hope on in his forlorn despair—

Whose morn and evening tears for thee fall down
Like dews on Hermon's thirsty crown—
And who would blessed be in all his ills,
Wander'd his feet once more even on thy desert hills!

But Hope's fair star is not extinguish'd quite
In rayless night;
And, Sion, as thy fortunes I bewail,
Harsh sounds my voice, as of the birds that sail
The stormy dark. Let but that star be mine,
And through the tempest tremulously shine;
So, when the brooding clouds have overpast,
Joy with the dawn of day may come at last;
Even as an instrument, whose lively sound
Makes the warm blood in every bosom bound,
And whose triumphant notes are given
Freely in songs of thanksgiving to Heaven!

Bethel!—and as thy name's name leaves my tongue,
The very life-drops from my heart are wrung!—
Thy sanctuary—where, veil'd in mystic light,
For ever burning, and for ever bright,
Jehovah's awful majesty reposed,
And shone for aye Heaven's azure gates unclosed—
Thy sanctuary!—where from the Eternal flow'd
The radiance of His glory, in whose power
Noonday itself like very darkness show'd,
And stars were none at midnight's darkest hour—
Thy sanctuary! O *there!* O *there!* that I
Might breathe my troubled soul out, sigh on sigh,

There, where thine effluence, Mighty God, was pour'd
On thine Elect, who, kneeling round, adored!

Stand off! the place is holy. Know ye not,
Of potter's clay the children, that this spot
Is sacred to the Everlasting One—
The Ruler over Heaven and over earth?
Stand off, degraded slaves, devoid of worth!
Nor dare profane again, as ye have done,
This spot—'tis holy ground—profane it not!

O, might I cleave, with raptured wing, the waste
Of the wide air, then, where in splendour lie
Thy ruins, would my sorrowing spirit haste
Forth to outpour its flood of misery!—
There where thy grandeur owns a dire eclipse,
Down to the dust as sank each trembling knee,
Unto thy dear soil should I lay my face,
Thy very stones in rapture to embrace,
And to thy smouldering ashes glue my lips!

And how, O Sion! how should I but weep,
As on our fathers' tombs I fondly gazed,
Or, wistfully, as turn'd mine eye
To thee, in all thy desolate majesty,
Hebron, where rests the mighty one in sleep,
And high his pillar of renown was raised!
There—in thine atmosphere—'twere blessedness
To breathe a purer ether. O! to me
Thy dust than perfumes dearer far should be,

And down thy rocks the torrent streams should roam
With honey in their foam!

O, sweet it were—unutterably sweet—
Even though with garments rent, and bleeding feet,
To wander over the deserted places
Where once thy princely palaces arose,
And 'mid the weeds and wild-flowers mark the traces
Where the ground, yawning in its earthquake throes,
The Ark of Covenant and the Cherubim
Received, lest stranger hands, that reek'd the while
With blood of thine own children, should defile
Its Heaven-resplendent glory, and bedim:
And my dishevell'd locks, in my despair,
All madly should I tear;
And as I cursed the day that dawn'd in heaven—
The day that saw thee to destruction given,
Even from my very frenzy should I wring
A rough rude comfort in my sorrowing.

What other comfort can I know? Behold,
Wild dogs and wolves with hungry snarl contend
Over thy prostrate mighty ones; and rend
Their quivering limbs, ere life hath lost its hold.
I sicken at the dawn of morn—the noon
Brings horror with its brightness; for the day
Shows but the desolate plain,
Where, feasting on the slain,
(Thy princes,) flap and scream the birds of prey!

Chalice from Marah's bitterest spring distill'd!
Goblet of woe, to overflowing fill'd!
Who, quaffing thee, can live? Give me but breath—
A single breath—that I once more may see
The dreary vision. I will think of thee,
Colla, once more—of Cliba will I think—
Then fearlessly and freely drink
The cup—the fatal cup—whose dregs are death.

Awake thee, Queen of Cities, from thy slumber—
Awake thee, Sion! Let the quenchless love
Of worshippers, a number beyond number,
A fountain of rejoicing prove.
Thy sorrows they bewail, thy wounds they see,
And feel them as their own, and mourn for thee!
Oh, what were life to them, did Hope not hold
Her mirror, to unfold
That glorious future to their raptured sight,
When a new morn shall chase away this night!
Even from the dungeon gloom,
Their yearning hearts, as from a tomb,
Are crying out—are crying out to thee;
And, as they bow the knee
Before the Eternal, every one awaits
The answer of his prayer, with face toward thy gates.

Earth's most celestial region! Babylon
The mighty, the magnificent, to thee,
With all the trappings of her bravery on,
Seems but a river to the engulfing sea.

What are its oracles but lies? 'Tis given
Thy prophets only to converse with Heaven—
The hidden to reveal, the dark to scan,
And be the interpreters of God to man.
The idols dumb that erring men invoke,
Themselves are vanities, their power is smoke:
But, while the heathen's pomp is insecure,
Is transient, thine, O Sion! shall endure;
For in thy temples, God, the only Lord,
Hath been, and still delights to be, adored.

Blessed are they who, by their love,
Themselves thy veritable children prove!
Yea! blessed they who cleave
To thee with faithful hearts, and scorn to leave!
Come shall the day—and come it may full soon—
When thou, more splendid than the moon,
Shalt rise; and, triumphing o'er night,
Turn ebon darkness into silver light:
The glory of thy brightness shall be shed
Around each faithful head:
Rising from thy long trance, earth shall behold
Thee loftier yet, and lovelier than of old;
And portion'd with the saints in bliss shall be
All who, thro' weal and woe, were ever true to thee!

NOTES TO ECHOES OF ANTIQUITY.

1.

The wide world's granary.—P. 79.

FROM time immemorial Sicily has been noted for its amazing fertility. It was hence styled *Romani Imperii Horreum*, at a time when the empire of the Cæsars scarcely knew limits. According to Pliny, its fields yielded a hundredfold; and Diodorus, surnamed *Siculus*, from the island being his birthplace, assumed patriotically that it produced wheat and other grain spontaneously. Brydone, in his spirited and classical *Tour*, gives it as his opinion, that any of its average harvests is sufficient to supply the whole inhabitants for seven years.

2.

The shell of gold.—P. 79.

"From the singularity of situation, as well as from the richness of the soil, Palermo has had many flattering epithets bestowed upon it, particularly by the poets, who have denominated it *Conca d'Oro*, the Golden Shell, which is at once expressive both of its situation and richness. It has likewise been called *Aurea Vallis*, *Hortus Siciliæ*, &c.; and to include all these together, the lasting term of *Felix* has been added to its name, by which you will find it distinguished in the maps."—BRYDONE'S *Tour through Sicily and Malta.*

3.

I woke, o'ershaded by an olive tree.—P 81.

The authority for the olive is, I fear, only poetical, but it is high. Sir Walter Scott, in recounting the wanderings of his Palmer to the holy places of the earth, after mentioning Salem, and Rome, and Ararat, and Sinai, and Montserrat, makes mention of

> "That grot where olives nod,
> Where, darling of each heart and eye,
> From all the youth of Sicily,
> Saint Rosalie retired to God."
> *Marmion*, Canto I. st. xxiii.

John Dryden — the son of glorious John — in his voyage to Sicily, (p. 107,) and Brydone — for they each visited the spot—give a very different account of it. The former calls it "a frightful place, accessible by a very bad, steepy, and break-neck way." Nor is the description by the latter more favourable. "The mountain is extremely high," he says, "and so uncommonly steep, that the road up to it is very properly termed *La Scala*, or The Stair. Before the discovery of St Rosalia, it was looked upon as almost inaccessible; but they have now, at a vast expense, cut out a road over precipices that were almost perpendicular."

4.

Gather together my unburied bones.—P. 82.

Brydone scandalises the memory of the good old Abbot, by alluding to the proverb, that "those who hide are the readiest to find," and that probably the bones of Rosalie were not her bones at all. We cannot countenance such shocking scepticism, more especially as the "tourist and traveller" gives us no other proof of imposition than his mere *ipse dixit*. He thinks that "the holy man *probably* could have given a very good account" of the relics found in the grot, and that *likely* they were as little entitled to honour as those of *St Viar*, which were found somewhere in Spain under a broken tombstone, when these were the only legible letters. They were discovered by some priests to have an excellent knack at working miracles, from which considerable revenues were drawn; till,

unfortunately, these made application to Pope Leo the Tenth to grant some immunities. His Holiness not being entirely satisfied with the saintship, a list of the miracles was sent to him, together with the broken tombstone. The first were sustained as genuine, but the latter having been proved to be part of a monument erected over a Roman *præfectus viarum*, the name of poor St VIAR was ordered to be struck out of the Calendar. As the best proof that this is no proof at all, St Rosalia still remains there.

5.

The loved—the quickly lost—and long deplored.—P. 83.

In the Sicilian language is an epic poem, of which St Rosalia is the heroine. The author at once sets her above all saints save the Virgin, whom he hardly excepts. From his work it appears that our heroine was niece to King William the Good—that she early displayed symptoms of sanctity, and, at fifteen, disclaimed all human society. Retiring to the mountains westward of Palermo, she was never more heard of for five hundred years. Her disappearance being in the year 1159, she was supposed to have been taken up to Heaven, till her bones were discovered in 1624, during a dreadful plague that devastated the island. These were found lying in a cave near the summit of the Monte Pelegrino, by a holy man who was led to them by a Heavenly vision, and told that, by carrying them thrice round the walls of Palermo, the pestilence would be stayed. So was it done—and St Rosalia became the greatest saint in the Calendar.

6.

The relics in a silver urn were borne.—P. 85.

This urn was deposited in the Chapel of St Rosalia, the most magnificent of the many which compose the *Madre Chiesa*, or Cathedral of Palermo. It is curiously wrought, and enriched with precious stones. These relics perform many miracles, and are looked upon as the greatest treasure appertaining to the city.

7.

On Pelegrino's rugged cliffs a fane.—P. 86.

"This chapel is very richly adorned; and on the spot where the Saint's body was discovered, which is just beneath the hole in the rock, which is opened on purpose, as I said, there is a very fine statue of marble, representing her in a lying posture, railed in all about with fine iron and brass work; and the altar, on which they say mass, is built just over it."—DRYDEN'S *Voyage.*

SONGS.

SONG OF THE SOUTH.

I.

Of all the garden flowers,
  The fairest is the rose;
Of winds that stir the bowers,
  O, there is none that blows
Like the South, the gentle South;
  For that balmy breeze is ours.

II.

Cold is the frozen North,
  In its stern and savage mood;
'Mid gales come drifting forth
  Bleak snows and drenching flood;
But the South, the gentle South,
  Thaws to love the willing blood.

III.

Bethink thee of the vales,
With their birds and blossoms fair—
Of the darkling nightingales,
That charm the starry air,
In the South, the gentle South;
Ah! our own dear home is there!

IV.

Where doth beauty brightest glow
With each rich and radiant charm,
Eyes of night and brow of snow,
Cherry lip, and bosom warm?
In the South, the gentle South—
There she waits and works her harm.

V.

Say, shines the star of love
From the clear and cloudless sky,
The shadowy groves above,
Where the nestling ring-doves lie?
From the South, the gentle South,
Gleams its lone and lucid eye.

VI.

Then turn ye to the home
Of your brethren and your bride;
Far astray your steps may roam,
And more joys for thee abide
In the South, our gentle South,
Than in all the world beside.

FAREWELL OUR FATHERS' LAND.

I.

FAREWELL our Fathers' land,
Valley and fountain;
Farewell old Scotland's strand,
Forest and mountain!
Then hush the drum, and hush the flute,
And be the stirring bagpipe mute—
Such sounds may not with sorrow suit,
And fare thee well, Lochaber!

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II.

The plume and plaid no more we'll see,
Nor philabeg, nor dirk at knee,
Nor even the broad-swords, which Dundee
Bade flash at Killiecrankie !
Farewell our Fathers' land, &c.

III.

Now where of yore, on bank and brae,
Our loyal clansmen marshall'd gay,
Far downward scowls Bennevis grey,
On sheep-walks spreading lonely.
Farewell our Fathers' land, &c.

IV.

For now we cross the stormy sea,
Ah ! never more to look on thee—
Nor on thy dun deer, bounding free,
From Etive glens to Morven !
Farewell our Fathers' land, &c.

V.

Thy mountain air no more we'll breathe ;
The household sword shall eat the sheath,
While rave the wild winds o'er the heath,
Where our grey sires are sleeping !
Then farewell our Fathers' land, &c.

MOURN FOR THE BRAVE.

I.

Oh, mourn for the brave,
  Who have fought for us, have bled for us;
Oh, mourn for the brave,
  Who lie low among the slain!
For us they left their native land,
To meet the foe on foreign strand;
For us they struggled sword in hand;
  And fought for us, and bled for us;
    But now they sleep
    In silence deep,
  Upon the battle-plain!

II

Dear were their homes to them,
  Who fought for us, who bled for us;
Dear were their homes to them,
  We ne'er shall see again!
But, at their country's call, they took
And turned to sword the pruning-hook;
A foeman's bonds they could not brook,

Who fought for us, who bled for us;
And now they sleep
In silence deep,
Upon the battle-plain!

III.

Deep is our debt to them,
Who fought for us, who bled for us;
Deep is our debt to them,
For us who crossed the main!
They gave our hills their golden fleece,
They gave our plains their rich increase,
To them we owe the ark of peace—
Who fought for us, who bled for us;
Though now they sleep
In silence deep,
Upon the battle-plain!

IV.

Then shout for the brave,
Who have fought for us, have bled for us;
Then shout for the brave,
Who poured out their blood like rain!
Their deeds shall every tongue engage;
Their names are writ on History's page;
And age shall proudly tell to age,
Who fought for us, who bled for us;
Though now they sleep,
In silence deep,
Upon the battle-plain!

ERIC'S DIRGE.

I.

Shon'st thou but to pass away,
Chieftain, in thy bright noon-day?
(All who knew thee, love thee!)
Who to Eric would not yield?
Red hand in the battle field,
Kinsman's idol, Beauty's shield,
Flowers we strew above thee!

II.

Eagle-like, in Glory's sky,
Soar'd thy dauntless spirit high;
(All who knew thee, love thee!)
Scion of a matchless race,
Strong in form, and fair of face,
First in field, and first in chase,
Flowers we strew above thee!

III.

Three to one Argyle came on,
Yet thy glance defiance shone;
(All who knew thee, love thee!)
Fear thine Islesmen never knew;
We were firm, tho' we were few;
And in front thy banner flew:—
Flowers we strew above thee!

IV.

What mere men could do was done;
Two at least we slew for one;
(All who knew thee, love thee!)
But, ah fatal was our gain!
For, amid the foremost slain,
Lay'st thou, whom we mourn in vain:—
Flowers we strew above thee!

V.

Mourn!—nor own one tearless eye,
Barra, Harris, Uist, and Skye!
(All who knew thee, love thee!)
Eric! low thou liest the while,
Shadowed by Iona's pile;
May no step thy stone defile:—
Flowers we strew above thee!

THE STORMY SEA.

I.

Ere the twilight bat was flitting,
In the sunset, at her knitting,
Sang a lonely maiden, sitting
Underneath her threshold tree;
And, as daylight died before us,
And the vesper star shone o'er us,
Fitful rose her tender chorus—
"Jamie's on the stormy sea!"

II.

Warmly shone that sunset glowing;
Sweetly breathed the young flowers blowing;
Earth, with beauty overflowing,
Seem'd the home of love to be,
As those angel tones ascending,
With the scene and season blending,
Ever had the same low ending—
"Jamie's on the stormy sea!"

III.

'Curfew bells remotely ringing,
Mingled with that sweet voice singing;
And the last red rays seem'd clinging
Lingeringly to tower and tree:
Nearer as I came, and nearer,
Finer rose the notes, and clearer;
O! 'twas Heaven itself to hear her—
"Jamie 's on the stormy sea!"

IV.

Blow, ye west winds! blandly hover
O'er the bark that bears my lover;
Gently blow, and bear him over
To his own dear home and me;
For, when night winds bend the willow,
Sleep forsakes my lonely pillow,
Thinking of the foaming billow—
"Jamie 's on the stormy sea!"

V.

How could I but list, but linger,
To the song, and near the singer,
Sweetly wooing Heaven to bring her
Jamie from the stormy sea:
And, while yet her lips did name me,
Forth I sprang—my heart o'ercame me—
"Grieve no more, sweet, I am Jamie,
Home returned to love and thee!"

THE MAID OF ULVA.

I.

THE hyacinth bathed in the beauty of spring,
The raven, when autumn hath darken'd his wing,
Were bluest and blackest, if either could vie
With the night of thy hair, or the morn of thine eye,—

II.

Fair maid of the mountain, whose home, far away,
Looks down on the islands of Ulva's blue bay;
May nought from its Eden thy footsteps allure,
To grieve what is happy, or dim what is pure!

III.

Between us a foam-sheet impassable flows—
The wrath and the hatred of clans who are foes;
But love, like the oak, while the tempest it braves,
The firmer will root it, the fiercer it raves.

IV.

Not seldom thine eye from the watch-tower shall hail,
In the red of the sunrise, the gleam of my sail;
And lone is the valley, and thick is the grove,
And green is the bower, that is sacred to love!

V.

The snows shall turn black on high Cruachan Ben,
And the heath cease to purple fair Sonachan glen,
And the breakers to foam, as they dash on Tiree,
When the heart in this bosom beats faithless to thee!

LAMENT FOR MACRIMMON.

I.

Mist wreathes stern Coolin like a cloud,
The water-wraith is shrieking loud,
And blue eyes gush with tears that burn,
For thee—who shall no more return!
Macrimmon shall no more return,
Oh never, never more return!
Earth, wrapt in doomsday flames, shall burn,
Before Macrimmon home return!

II.

The wild winds wail themselves asleep,
The rills drop tear-like down the steep,
In forest glooms the songsters mourn,
For thee—who shall no more return!
Macrimmon shall no more return, &c.

III.

Even hoar old Ocean joins our wail,
Nor moves the boat, though bent with sail;
Fierce shrieking gales the breakers churn,
For thee—who shall no more return!
Macrimmon shall no more return, &c.

IV.

No more, at eve, thy harp in hall
Shall from the tower faint echoes call;
There songless circles vainly mourn
For thee—who shall no more return!
Macrimmon shall no more return, &c.

V.

Thou shalt return not from afar
With wreaths of peace, or spoils of war;
Each breast is but affection's urn
For thee—who shall no more return!
Macrimmon shall no more return,
Oh never, never more return,
Earth, wrapt in doomsday flames, shall burn,
Before Macrimmon home return!

HEIGH-HO!

I.

A PRETTY young maiden sat on the grass,
Sing heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho!
And by a blithe young shepherd did pass,
In the summer morning so early.
Said he, "My lass, will you go with me,
My cot to keep, and my bride to be;
Sorrow and want shall never touch thee,
And I will love you rarely?"

II.

"O! no, no, no!" the maiden said,
Sing heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho!
And bashfully turn'd aside her head,
On that summer morning so early!
"My mother is old, my mother is frail,
Our cottage it lies in yon green dale;
I dare not list to any such tale,
For I love my kind mother rarely."

III.

The shepherd took her lily-white hand,
Sing heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho!
And on her beauty did gazing stand,
On that summer morning so early.
"Thy mother I ask thee not to leave,
Alone in her frail old age to grieve;
But my home can hold us all, believe—
Will that not please thee fairly?"

IV.

"O! no, no, no! I am all too young,
Sing heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho!
I dare not list to a young man's tongue,
On a summer morning so early."
But the shepherd to gain her heart was bent;
Oft she strove to go, but she never went;
And at length she fondly blush'd consent—
Heaven blesses true lovers so fairly.

THE

WANDERER OF CONNAUGHT.

I.

Oh! Norah, when wandering afar from the shade
Of the woods, where in childhood so happy we stray'd,
From eyes that are strangers, and breasts that are cold,
My heart often turns to the pleasures of old.

II.

Oh! Norah, my sister, how lovely and bright
The green vales of Connaught appear to my sight;
How starts the wild tear, when in thought I survey
The cabin so neat, with its children at play!

III.

What though I am doom'd with my sorrows to roam
From Erin, my land, and the glen of my home,
From the spot where the bones of my fathers repose,
And the stream, where the briar and the wild lily grows;

IV.

Yet often, when midnight hangs dreary around,
And the breeze flaps the tent with a desolate sound,
On the pallet I dream of our dear shieling fire,
And the faces that circle my mother and sire!

V.

I see the sweet group, and I hear their lips pray
Success to the wanderer, who roams far away.
My dear sister, Norah, again shall it be
My fate the green pastures of Connaught to see?

VI.

Again to stray forth with the flocks to the field,
From grief the white hairs of my parents to shield;
And be laid, my dear Norah, when being shall cease,
With my sires who have gone to the mansions of peace?

MARY DHU.

ADAPTED TO THE MUSIC OF AN ANCIENT GAELIC AIR.

I.

SWEET, sweet is the rose-bud
Bathed in dew;
But sweeter art thou,
My Mary dhu.
O! the skies of night,
With their eyes of light,
Are not so bright
As my Mary dhu.
Whenever thy radiant face I see,
The clouds of sorrow depart from me;
As the shadows fly
From day's bright eye,
Thou lightest life's sky,
My Mary dhu.

II.

Sad, sad is my heart
When I sigh, Adieu!
Or gaze on thy parting,
My Mary dhu:

Then for thee I mourn,
Till thy steps' return
Bids my bosom burn—
My Mary dhu.
I think but of thee on the broom-clad hills;
I muse but of thee on the moorland rills:
In the morning light,
In the moonshine bright,
Thou art still in my sight,
My Mary dhu.

III.

Thy voice trembles through me,
Like the breeze,
That ruffles, in gladness,
The leafy trees;
'Tis a wafted tone
From Heaven's high throne,
Making hearts thine own,
My Mary dhu.
Be the flowers of joy ever round thy feet,
With colours glowing, and incense sweet;
And, when thou must away,
May life's rose decay
In the west wind's sway—
My Mary dhu!

THE RUSTIC LAD'S LAMENT IN THE TOWN.

I.

O WAD that my time were owre but,
Wi' this wintry sleet and snaw,
That I might see our house again,
I' the bonnie birken shaw!
For this is no my ain life,
And I peak and pine away
Wi' the thochts o' hame and the young flowers,
In the glad green month o' May.

II.

I used to wauk in the morning
Wi' the loud sang o' the lark,
And the whistling o' the ploughmen lads,
As they gaed to their wark;
I used to wear the bit young lambs
Frae the tod and the roaring stream;
But the warld is chang'd, and a' thing now
To me seems like a dream!

III.

There are busy crowds around me,
On ilka lang dull street;
Yet, tho' sae mony surround me,
I kenna ane I meet;
And I think o' kind, kent faces,
And o' blithe an' cheery days,
When I wandered out wi' our ain folk,
Out-owre the simmer braes.

IV.

Waes me, for my heart is breaking!
I think o' my brithers sma',
And on my sister greeting,
Whan I cam frae hame awa!
And oh! how my mither sobbit,
As she shook me by the hand,
When I left the door o' our auld house,
To come to this stranger land.

V.

There's nae hame like our ain hame—
O I wush that I were there!
There's nae hame like our ain hame,
To be met wi' ony where;
And O that I were back again,
To our farm and fields sae green;
And heard the tongues o' my ain folk,
And were what I hae been!

BALLADS.

THE CAMPEADOR'S SPECTRE HOST.

> What are these
> So withered, and so wild in their attire,
> That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
> And yet are on't?
>
> MACBETH.

I.

On Leon's towers deep midnight lay;
Grim clouds had blotted the stars away;
By fits 'twas silent, by fits the gale
Swept through heaven like a funeral wail.

II.

Heard ye that distant, that dismal hum,
That trumpet-blare, and that roll of drum,
That clashing of cymbals—and now again
The wail of the night wind, the rush of rain?

III.

Know ye whence comes it? 'Tis like the shock
Of torrents o'erleaping some barrier rock.
Hearken again! 'Tis more near, more loud,
Like the opening burst of the thunder-cloud.

IV.

List ye not now, on the echoing street,
The trampling of horses, the tread of feet,
The clashing of arms? 'Tis a host of might,
Marching in mask of the starless night.

V.

St Isidro! at thy deep-browed gate,
Who crowding throng, who knocking wait?[1]
The Frere, from his midnight vigil there
Upstarting, scales the turret stair.

VI.

Aghast he trembles; that turmoil loud
Might waken the corse in its leaden shroud;
And thickens the blood in his veins thro' fear,
As unearthly voices smite his ear.

VII.

"Ho! warriors, rouse ye! Ho! dead arise!
Haste, gird your good swords on your thighs;
Hauberk and helm from grave-rust free;
And rush to the rescue of Spain with me!

VIII.

"Pelayo is with us; and who despairs,
When his Cross of Oak in our van he bears?[2]
Come—muster ye must to my call once more—
'Tis I, your Cid—the Campeador![3]

IX.

"Awaken, arise! through our land in arms
The host of the Miramamolin swarms;
Shall our Cross before their Crescent wane?
Shall Moorish dogs rule Christian Spain?

X.

"Arouse ye in might—in your shirts of steel,
With spear in hand, and spur on heel;
Shake from your Red Cross flags the dust,
And wash in blood your swords from rust.

XI.

"Haste! burst your cerements; here we wait
For thee, Ferrando, once the Great;
Knock on your porter, Death, until he
Withdraw the bolts, and turn the key!

XII.

"Hither—haste hither, and join our hosts—
A mighty legion of stalwart ghosts;
'Tis I, Ruy Diaz, who call, and here
Gonzalez couches in rest his spear![4]

XIII.

"Awake! arise ye on every hand!
The love a patriot bears his land
Departs not with departing breath,
But warms his very dust in death!

XIV.

"Quail shall the boldest, the timid yield,
When sweeps our spectre-host the field;
Vultures in clouds, to the feast of the slain,
Scream from sierras and seek the plain.

XV.

"Ho! hurry with us then away, away,
Ere the warning cock-crow herald day;
Bid blast of trumpet, and roll of drum
Proclaim to the Moslem, we come, we come!"

XVI.

Into the darkness the Frere gazed forth—
The sounds rolled onwards towards the North;
The murmur of tongues, the tramp and tread
Of a mighty army to battle led.

XVII.

At midnight, slumbering Leon through,
Throng'd to the Navas that spectral crew;
At blush of day red Tolosa showed
That more than men had fought for God!

THE HIGHLANDER'S RETURN.

I.

YOUNG Donald Bane, the gallant Celt, unto the wars had gone,
And left within her Highland home his plighted love alone;
Yet though the waves between them roll'd, on eastern Egypt's shore,
As he thought of Mhairi Macintyre, his love grew more and more.

II.

It was a sullen morning when he breathed his last adieu,
And down the glen, above his men, the chieftain's banner flew;
When bonnets waved aloft in air, and war-pipes scream'd aloud,
And the startled eagle left the cliff for shelter in the cloud.

III.

Brave Donald Bane, at duty's call, hath sought a foreign strand,
And Donald Bane amid the slain hath stood with crimson brand;
And when the Alexandrian beach with Gallic blood was dyed,
Stream'd the tartan plaid of Donald Bane at Abercromby's side.

IV.

And he had seen the Pyramids, Grand Cairo, and the bay
Of Aboukir, whereon the fleet of gallant Nelson lay;
And he had seen the Turkish hosts in their barbarian pride,
And listen'd as from burial fields the midnight chacal cried.

V.

Yes, many a sight had Donald seen in Syrian deserts lone,
To many a shore had Donald been, but none that matched his own;
Amid the dates and pomegranates, the temples and the towers,
He thought of Albyn's cliffy huts, begirt with heather flowers.

VI.

So joyous beat the soldier's heart again from deck to see,
Rising from out the German wave, the island of the free;
And stately was his step when crowds, with plaudits from the main,
Welcom'd once more to Britain's shore its heroes back again!

VII.

Hush'd was the war din that in wrath from coast to coast had roar'd,
And stay'd were slaughter's beagle fangs, and sheath'd the patriot's sword,
When—'twas the pleasant summer time—arose in green again,
His own dear Highland mountains on the sight of Donald Bane.

VIII.

Four years had lapsed in absence, wherein his steps had ranged
'Mid many a far and foreign scene, but his heart was unestranged;
And when he saw Argyle's red deer once more from thicket flee,
And again he trod Glen Etive's sod, a mountaineer was he!

IX.

There stood the shieling of his love, beneath the sheltering trees,
Sweet sang the lark, the summer air was musical with bees;
And when he reach'd the wicket porch, old Stumah fawning fain,
First nosed him round, then licked his hand—'twas bliss to Donald Bane.

X.

His heart throbb'd as he entered—no sound was stirring there,—
And in he went, and on he went, when behold his Mhairi fair!
Before her stood the household wheel unmurmurous, and the thread
Still in her fingers lay, as when its tenuous twine she led.

XI.

He stood and gazed, a man half crazed: before him she reclined
In half unkerchief'd loveliness—the idol of his mind;
Bland was the sleep of innocence, as to her dreams were given
Elysian walks with him she loved, amid the bowers of Heaven!

XII.

He gazed her beauties o'er and o'er—her shining
auburn hair,
Her ivory brow, her rosebud mouth, her cheek car-
nation fair;
Her round white arms, her bosom's charms, that,
with her breathing low,
Like swan-plumes on a ripply lake heaved softly to
and fro.

XIII.

He could no more—but, stooping down, he clasp'd
her to his soul,
And from the honey of her lips a rapturous kiss he
stole:
As hill-deer bound from bugle sound, swerved Mhairi
from her rest,
It could not be—O, yes, 'tis he!—and she sank on
Donald's breast.

XIV.

What boots to tell what them befel?—or how, in
bridal mirth,
Blithe feet did bound to music's sound, beside the
mountain hearth,
Or how the festal cup was drain'd on hill-side and
on plain,
To the healths of lovely Mhairi, and her faithful
Donald Bane?

WIZZERDE WYNKIN'S DETHE.

ANE AUNCIENT BALLAD

I.

THE Wizzerde's een grewe derke and dimme ;
Hys troubbledde mynde wals lyke the sea,
Whenne the waaves splashhe hye to the bending skye,
And wild storme wynndes howl dismallye.

II.

The Wizzerde's een grewe dulle ande dimme ;
Hee shooke hys lokkis offe grizzledde whyte,
And summonsedde hys kynsmen toe come toe hym—
They stode by hys bedde twixt the daye ande nycht.

III.

Hee lyfted uppe hys skynnye wrinkledde honde ;
Hollowe wals hys voice, and dredde toe hear,
As the mydnight blaste cominge flychteringe past
The kirk-yarde's throughstanes drear.

IV.

"I maye notte praye—I daure notte praye—"
'Twas thus the wytheredde oulde manne saide;
"But I must awaie, ere the glymmer offe day,
Toe the darksome landdes offe the deadde.

V.

"I must now awaie—aronde the roofe
Arre Feeyndes uprysen from the yerde beneathe;
See, see their fierce eyne, and herke to their cryen,
And the gryndinge offe their yron teethe!

VI.

"Myne houre is come, yette I shrynk fro the doome,
Whilke mee deedes have deservit soe welle;
Oh! whatte wolde I give, weren itte myne toe live,
Butte toe rescue me speerit fro Helle!

VII.

"The Feeyndes have come fro theire derk myrk home,
Toe carrye mee doune too theire Mastere grimme;
Forre yeres thryce seven, I have mockedde atte Heavenne,
Ande payit the bloddye kaine toe hymme.

VIII.

"Herke toe the stormme as itte howllis wythoutte—
Toe the roaringe blastte, ande the rushinge rainne;
There arre yemmerings dire atte the chymneye toppe;
The ravene croakes at the batteredde pane.

IX.

" Nowe hearkene mee voice, kynde kynsfolke alle,
I pray you now herkene toe mee,
Orre youre lyfe belowe wyth feare ande wyth woe
Shall trobbledde ande darkenedde bee.

X.

" Whenne mee eyne close deeppe, in Dethe's dredde sleepe,
And styffens mee corpse wyth colde,
Inne ane Hollan sheete wrappe mee hede and feete,
Ere mydnycht belle hathe tolledde.

XI.

" And keipe werde bye mee bedde, butte lette bee saide
Norre requiemme, hymme, norre prayere,
Else the foulle Feeyndes theye wolde sweepe awaie
Mee corpse throe the starre-lit ayre.

XII.

" Butte laye mee dounne inne ane coffinne meete,
Norre wordde be spokken, norre tere be shedde ;
Ande lette ane grene wythe bee tiedde toe the feete,
Ande ane grene wythe toe the hede.

XIII.

" Ande carrye mee outte, ere Daie's fyrst streeke
Illoominnes the mystte-cledde playne,
Forre iffe the redde cokke crowe, I am doomit toe woe,
Ande an ever ande aye offe painne !

XIV.

"Toe the kirke offe Dumgree ye muste carrye mee,
Bye the wythies grene atte hede and foote;
Boke, candle, and belle, there maye notte bee,
Ande lette all bee stylle ande mute.

XV.

"Soe whenne ye come toe the ashe-treen wylde,
Thatte sproutte fro the derke hille-toppe,
Putte mee coffinne doune onne the Elfinne-stone,
Ande stonde aloofe, as there ye stoppe.

XVI.

"Take ane yonge raven, and caste her uppe—
Iff shee perce awaie throo the ayre,
Alle welle maye bee; butte iffe onne tree
Shee foldes her wynges—bewaare!"

XVII.

Thrice moanedde the Wizzerde ere hee passedde,
Ande thrice hee wavit hys arm onne hie;
Loudde howlit wythoutte the fearfulle blaste,
Ande swepte the hauntedde cottage bye.

XVIII.

Thennie rose loudde soundes offe woe and waile,
Arounde the rooffe-tree, ande throo the skies;
Ande skryekes were herde on the moaninge gaile;
And cries—whilke were notte earthlye cries!

XIX.

Theye lokit in drede onne the Wizzerde dede,
Ane sylente horrour came o'ere themme alle ;
He was chille, colde claye ; alle muveless laye
The sheddowe offe hys face againste the walle.

XX.

Their eyen were fixedde ; their tongues were stille ;
Theye hymnedde noe hymn, theye praied no prayere ;
The wolfe-doug alone gave ane piteous mone,
As terroure bristledde hys shaggedde haire.

XXI.

Then theye shroudded the corpse inne ane wynding sheete,
Ande screwedde itte the reddye coffinne withinne ;
Theye fastenedde grene wythes to the hede ande feete,
Syne watchit till the paaling starres grew thinne.

XXII.

Greye dawne glimmerit on banke ande brae ;
The starres were goinge outte one bye one ;
Whenne mountinge each onne the browne ande greye,
Theye have their frychtfulle taske begunne.

XXIII.

Three have mountit their steedes offe greye,
Three have mountit their steedes offe browne ;
Ere the fyrste strycke offe daie, theye have borne awaie
The Wizzerde's coffinne o'ere dale ande downe.

XXIV.

They sparedde notte whippe, they sparedde notte spurre,
Throo the dawninge theye scouredde awaie—awaie!
The breathinge broke fro their steedes like smoke,
And foame fro their flankes like oceanne spraye.

XXV.

Like byrde thatte whirrs fro the pouncinge hawke,
Like hare thatte scuddes fro yellinge hounde,
They turnedde notte backe fro their pantinge trakke;
Awaie and awaie did theye beare and bownde.

XXVI.

Awaie and awaie, over banke ande brae,
Theye fledde wythe the corpse offe the Wizzerde onne;
Untille theye made halte atte the rowande-treen,
Ande restedde itte doune onne the Elfinne-stone.

XXVII.

Straighte ane sudden sounde uprose fro the grounde,
And across the heathe wente boominge wide;
Eache helde bye the bitte hys startledde steede,
Lystenninge inne fere whatte mycht betyde!

XXVIII.

Two fire-eyned bulles came bellowing onne,
Wyth shyning horne ande tramplinge hooffe;
Their mychty cries, and their flashinge eyes,
Made the startledde watcheres stonde aloofe.

XXIX.

Blakke was eache hyde as the starlesse nycht,
Brighte as redde fyre werre their glancing cyne;
Volumes offe smokke from eache nostrille brokke,
Beneath themme scrotchedde was the grassyè grene.

XXX.

Huge staggeringe onne toe the corpse theye wente,
Wyth lashinge tailes, and bellowinges loudde;
Throo the wythies grene their hornnes they bente,
And awaie inne wrethe, like ane thundere-cloudde.

XXXI.

Echoedde the grene hills their bellowinges hershe,
As wyth routte and roare they flounderit onne;
The horsemenne pursuedde throo strathe and woode,
In blude to the rowells their spurres have gone.

XXXII.

Inne pursutte hollo! inne pursutte they goe,
The pantinge ridere, ande foaminge steede;
Over holte ande deane, with the coffinne betweene,
The blackke bulles galloppinge leade.

XXXIII.

Westlin, westlin their course theye helde—
Wyth lashinge tailes toe the rysinge sunne;
The horses snortedde, the horsemenne halloedde,
Such chase onne grene sward was nevire runne!

XXXIV.

Awaie and awaie toe ane hille toppe derke—
The rydderes hurriedde toe halte themme there;
But they flounderedde awaie, withoutte stoppe orre staye,
Toe the next hille-top throo the ayre.

XXXV.

Hershe echoingse fille everye Nithsdale hille;
The blakke-cok crowinge forsoke the heathe;
Deepe murmuringe ranne the watere offe Branne
Their unearthly flychte beneathe.

XXXVI.

Thenne the steedes were turnedde, the vale was triedde;
Butte the blakke bulls lefte themme farre behinde.
Grene-swairde trampleres muste evere faile,
Whenne matchedde wyth treaderes offe winde.

XXXVII.

Yette awaie and awaie, throo the strathe rode theye,
O'er meadowe, and marish, ande springe, and banke;
The toil-droppes felle fro eache brenning brow,
The frothe fro eache reekinge flanke.

XXXVIII.

Ande whenne the Closeburne heichtes they wonne,
Ande theye saw Loch Ettrichte gleaminge wide,
Wyth roare ande yelle, thatte mycht stertle Helle,
The bulles plungedde hedelonge inne the tide!

XXXIX.

Sanke the blakke bulles downe, the coffine sanke
Inne the wave, wyth ane splashinge sounde;
Thenne the wateres theye clossede, ande alle reposedde
Inne unearthlye peace arounde.

XL.

Itte was soe stille thatte, afarre onne the hille,
The murmure offe twinklinge leaves was hearde;
Ande the lapsinge shrille offe the mountaine rille,
Ande the hymne-nottes off earlye byrde.

XLI.

Onne the moorlande dreare, forre manye an yeare,
The Wizzerde's dolefulle shielinge stoode;
'Twas shunnede bye alle; ande, atte eveninge falle,
Wyth the lurridde flames off bremstone glowed.

XLII.

Butte the windes offe heavene, and the rainnes offe heavene,
Beatte itte downe; ande noughte is standinge nowe,
Save the molderinge rydge offe ane mosse-growne walle,
Sparedde bye the shudderinge farmere's ploughe.

XLIII.

O, wandere notte neare, whenne Nychte frownes dreare;
Forre, whenne travelleres hurrye past,
Wille ofte aryse loud unworldlye cries,
Offe waile ande offe woe, onne the blaste.

XLIV.

Ande the spectre bulles tosse their hornes onne hye,
Ande amidde the darknesse roare,
Ande spleshe the crestedde waves toe the skye,
Ande shaake the rockye shore.

XLV.

Ande atte Wintere-tide, whenne the cold moone shines
On the glytteringe ice ande the sperklinge snowe,
Dismalle soundes awake onne the frozzenne lake,
Ande the Wizzerde's tongue ye knowe.

XLVI.

Shunne these soundes unbleste—forre that Wizzerde's reste,
Norre Bedesman praied, norre belle dide tolle;
Norre gravestone prest on hys perjuredde brest:
Gramercye on his soulle!

NOTES TO BALLADS.

1.

———At thy deep-browed gate,
Who crowding throng, who knocking wait?—P. 124.

THIS slight ballad is founded on a very striking passage in the *Chronicle of the Cid*, to the admirable translation of which, by Mr Southey, I would direct the attention of the English reader, as a repertory of chivalrous and romantic incident, singularly at antipodes to the prosaic utilitarianism of our own time. Its pervading idea—that of the patriotic retaining their love of country even beyond death, and a zeal for its rescue from oppression and danger—is a high and ennobling one; and is so natural as to have found a place in the traditional superstitions of almost every people, from the Calmuc Tartar to the Scots and Swiss. The three founders of the Helvetic Confederacy are thought to sleep in a cavern near the lake of Lucerne; and the herdsmen call them the Three Tells. They say that they lie there in their antique garb, in quiet slumber; and, when Switzerland is in her utmost need, that they will awaken and reconquer its liberties. Mrs Hemans' fine lyric, "The Cavern of the Three Tells," is founded on this legend. The very spirited French ballad of "The Drunomer," or "Napoleon's Midnight Review," of which we have several good translations, originates in a similar sentiment; as also

one of the stanzas in Campbell's matchless "Mariners of England"—

> "The spirits of your fathers
> Shall start from every wave!
> For the deck it was their field of fame,
> And ocean was their grave."

Ferrando the Great was buried in the Royal Monastery of St Isidro, at Leon. The *time when* of this spiritual belligerence was during the reign of Queen Alphonso, on the night before the decisive battle of the Navas de Tolosa; of which it is chronicled that sixty thousand of the Mahometans were then and there slain.

2.

Pelayo is with us; and who despairs,
When his Cross of Oak in our van he bears?—P. 124.

The badge of Pelayo was an Oaken Cross, which he is said to have always had carried in the van of his army, when he led it on to battle.

3.

'Tis I, your Cid—the Campeador I—P. 124.

The surname of Campeador, applied to the Cid Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, has been a stumbling-block to antiquarians. I am inclined to adopt the solution of Verstegan, who derives it from the word *Cemp* or *Kemp*, "properly one that fighteth hand to hand, whereunto the name in Teutonic of *Kemp fight* accordeth, and in French of *Combat*." From a note at p. 5 of Southey's Introduction to *The Chronicle of the Cid*, that distinguished scholar would seem to infer, from some peculiar Spanish expression it contains, that it is a composition even more ancient than the *General Chronicles of Spain*, known to have been written before 1384. The legends of the Cid are perhaps, beyond all others in Spain—as those of the Wallace and Bruce in Scotland—the most favourite and frequent subject of the old minstrels of that country; and such is their spirit-stirring character that the English reader can never tire of him in the congenially glowing pages of Southey, Frere, and Lockhart.

4.

Gonzalez couches in rest his spear.—P. 125.

"The story of Fernan Gonzalez," writes Mr Lockhart, "is detailed in the *Chronica Antiqua de España* with so many romantic circumstances, that certain modern critics have been inclined to consider it as entirely fabulous. Of the main parts recorded there seems, however, no good reason to doubt. . . . . He lived at the beginning of the tenth century. It was under his rule, according to the Chronicles, that Castile first became an independent Christian state; and it was by his exertions that the first foundations were laid of that system of warfare by which the Moorish power in Spain was ultimately overthrown. . . . . There is, as might be expected, a whole body of old ballads concerning the adventures of Fernan Gonzalez."—*Ancient Spanish Ballads*, p. 28, 29.

TALES.

DE QUINCEY'S REVENGE.

A BALLAD IN THREE FITTES.

FITTE FIRST.

I.

De Quincey, lord of Travernent,
  Has from the Syrian wars return'd
As near'd his train to his own domain,
  His heart within him burn'd.
Yet heavy was that heart, I ween:
  A cloud had o'er him pass'd;
And all of life, that once was green,
  Had wither'd in the blast.
Say, had he sheath'd his trusty brand,
  Intent no more to roam,
Only to find the Scottish strand
  For him no fitting home? [1]

II.

Who stands at hush of eventide
  Before Newbottle's sacred walls,
While eastward far, in arch and aisle,
  Its mighty shadow falls?

That steel-clad Knight stood at the porch,
And loud he knock'd, and long,
Till out from the chancel came a Frere,
For it was even-song.
To an alder stump his steed was tied,
And the live wind from the west
Stirr'd the blue scarf on his corslet side,
And the raven plumes of his crest.

III.

"Why knock'st thou here? no hostel this,
And we have mass to say;
Know'st thou, that rises our vesper-hymn
Duly at close of day?
And in the chantry, even now,
The choristers are met;
For lo! o'er Pentlands' summits blue,
The western sun is set?
But if thou return'st at morning tide,
Whatever be thy behest"—
"Nay," said the stranger hastily,
"Delay not my request.

IV.

"For I have come from foreign lands,
And seen the sun of June
Set over the holy Jerusalem,
And its towers beneath the moon;

And I have stood by the sepulchre
Wherein the Lord was laid,
And drunk of Siloa's brook, that flows
In the cool of its own palm shade.
Yea! I have battled for the Cross,
'Tis the symbol on my mail—
But why, with idle words, should I
Prolong a bootless tale?

V.

"The Lady Elena—woe to me
Brought the words that tale which told—
Was yesternight, by the red torchlight,
Left alone in your vaults so cold.
'Tis said, last night by the red torchlight,
That a burial here hath been;
Now show me, prithee, her tomb, who stood
My heart and Heaven between.
Alas! alas! that a cold damp vault
Her resting-place should be,
Who, singing, sate among the flowers
When I went o'er the sea."

VI.

"'Tis nay, Sir Knight," the Frere replied,
"If thou turn'st thy steed again,
And hither return'st at matin prime,
Thou shalt not knock in vain."

Then ire flash'd o'er that warrior's brow,
Like storm-clouds o'er the sky,
And, stamping, he struck his gauntlet glove
On the falchion by his thigh :—
"Now, by our Lady's holy name,
And by the good St John,
I must gaze on the features of the dead,
Though I hew my path through stone!"

VII.

The Frere hath lighted his waxen torch,
And turn'd the grating key,
Down winding steps, through gloomy aisles,
The damp, dull way show'd he;
And ever he stood and cross'd himself,
As the night wind smote his ear,
For the very carven imageries
Spake nought but of death and fear—
And sable 'scutcheons flapp'd on high
'Mid that grim and ghastly shade;
And coffins were ranged on tressels round,
And banners lowly laid.

VIII.

From aisle to aisle they pass'd the while,
In silence both—the one in dread—
So solemn a thing it was to be
With darkness and the dead!

At length the innermost vault they gain'd,
Last home of a house of fame,
And the Knight, looking up, with earnest eye,
Read the legend round the name—
"*Unsullied aye our honours beam,*"
'Neath fleur-de-lis and crescent shone;
And o'er the Dragon spouting fire,
The battle-word, "Set on!"[2]

IX.

"Yes! here, good Frere—now, haste thee, ope"—
The holy man turn'd the key;
And ere ever he had an "Ave" said,
The Knight was on his knee.
He lifted the lawn from her waxen face,
And put back the satin soft;
Fled from her cheek was the glowing grace
That had thrill'd his heart so oft!
The past came o'er him like a spell,
For earth could now no bliss afford,
And thus, within that cheerless cell,
His bitter plaint he pour'd.

X.

"Oh, Elena! I little dreamt,
When I sailed o'er the sea,
That, coming back, our meeting next
In a charnel-vault should be!

I left thee in thy virgin pride,
A living flower of beauty rare ;
And now I see thee at my side
What words may not declare !
Oh ! I have met thee on the waves,
On the field have braved thee, Death ;
But ne'er before so sank my heart
Thy withering scowl beneath !

XI.

" How different was the time, alas !
When, in the sunny noon, my love,
I trysted with thee in the stag coppice,
In the centre of the grove !
How different was the time, alas !
When from the tower of high Falsyde,[3]
We mark'd along the bay of Forth
The streamer'd galleys glide !
How different was the time, alas !
When the gay gold ring I gave,
And thou didst say, when far away,
I will bear it to my grave ! "

XII.

The Knight turn'd back the satin fold
Where her hand lay by her side,
And there, on her slender finger cold,
He the token-ring espied !

"Now know I thou wert true to me,
Ah! false thou couldst not prove;
Vain was the hate that strove to mate
Thy heart with a stranger love."
And then he kiss'd her clay-cold cheek,
And then he kiss'd his sword:—
"By this," he said, "sweet, injured maid,
Thy doom shall be deplored!

XIII.

"Yes! darkly some shall make remeid,
And dearly some shall pay
For griefs that broke thy faithful heart,
When I was far away!"
"Nay! dost thou talk of vengeance now,"
Quod the Frere, "on thy bended knee?"
The Knight look'd wildly up in his face,
But never a word spake he.
"Now rise, now rise, Sir Knight!" he cried,
"Mary Mother calm thy mind!
'Twas the fiat of Heaven that she should die,
To its will be thou resigned!"

XIV.

Uprose De Quincey from his knee,
In that darksome aisle and drear;
No word he spake, but, with hasty glove,
Brush'd off one starting tear;

Then, as he donn'd his helm, he pluck'd
The silken scarf from its crest,
And upraised it first to his meeting lip,
Then hid it within his breast.
The scenes—the thoughts of other years
Pour'd o'er him like a lava tide;
Her day was done, and set her sun,
And all for him was night beside!

XV.

The coffin lid was closed; the Frere
Preceded, with his taper wan;
Behind him strode the black-mail'd Knight,
A melancholy man!
And oft the Monk, as he upwards clomb
From the darksome place of dread,
Where the coffin'd clay of fair Elena lay,
Did backwards turn his head—
Say, holy Frere, can the waves of fear
O'er thy calm, pure spirit flow;
Or is it the cold, through these vaults of mould,
That makes thee tremble so?

XVI.

The porch they gain'd—the Frere he closed
The gates behind the Knight;
Dim lay the clouds, like giant shrouds,
Over the red starlight;

And ever, with low moaning sound,
The soft warm gust wail'd through the trees;
Calm, in slumber bound, lay all around,
And the stream sang "Hush!" to the breeze.
The Frere put out his torch, and look'd
His high-barr'd lattice fro';
And he saw, 'mid the dusk, the mounted Knight
Down the winding valley go.

FITTE SECOND.

I.

'Twas the flush of dawn; on the dewy lawn
Shone out the purpling day;
The lark on high sang down from the sky,
The thrush from the chestnut spray;
On the lakelet blue, the water-coot
Oar'd forth with her sable young;
While at its edge, from reed and sedge,
The fisher-hern upsprung;
In peaceful pride, by Esk's green side,
The shy deer stray'd through Roslin glen;
And the hill-fox to the Roman camp [4]
Stole up from Hawthornden.[5]

II.

Where hurries so fast the henchman?
His steed seems froth'd with spray—
To Newbottle's shrine, 'mid the dawning lone,
He speeds his onward way.

From grey Caerbarrin's walls he came,[6]
By Smeaton Shaw, through Colden Wood,
And up thy royal way, Derstrette,[7]
His path he hath pursued;
Until, upon its flowery lawn,
By murmuring Esk's enamour'd side,
The Abbey's grand and massive walls
Were 'mid its groves espied.[8]

III.

"Awake," he cries, as loudly he knocks,
"Ho! arise, and haste with me;
For soon, alas, Caerbarrin's lord
Among the dead must be!"
Then forth out spake the abbot grey,
From his couch, as he arose,
"Alack! thou bring'st us evil news,
For thy lord he was of those
Who dower'd our church with goodly lands,
And his sword hath ever been,
For Scotland's glory and for ours,
At the call, unsheath'd and keen.

IV.

"But the best are aye the first to die;
This sinful earth is not their place;
Sure is the passage of the good—
Mary Mother yield them grace!

Then rest thee in our porter's keep,
While our brother Francis will repair
To the house of woe, and soothe the soul
Of the dying man with prayer!"
The henchman sate him down to rest,
And wiped the toil-drops from his brow;
While in hurry and haste, on shrieving quest,
The Frere was boune to ride and go.

V.

Thro' the green woodlands spurr'd the monk—
The morning sun was shining bright,
Upon his bosom lay the Book,[9]
Under his cloak of white;
Before him, in the pleasant prime,
The willow'd stream meandering flow'd;
From wildflowers by the pathway side,
The gallant heathcock crow'd;
Glisten'd the dew on the harebells blue;
And, as the west wind murmur'd by,
From yellow broom stole forth perfume,
As from gardens of Araby.

VI.

Now lay his road by beechen groves,
Now by daisied pastures green;
And now from the vista'd mountain-road,
The shores of Fife were seen;

And now Dalcaeth behind him lay—[10]
And now its castle, whence the Græme
Sent forth his clump of Border spears,
The vaunting Gael to tame;
Now by coppice and corn he urged his steed,
Now by dingle wild and by dell,
Where down by Cousland's limestone rocks
The living waters well.

VII.

Then he came to a clump of oak-trees hoar,
Half over the steep road hung,
When up at once to his bridle-rein
The arm of a warrior sprung;
With sudden jerk, the startled steed
Swerved aside with bristling mane:—
"Now halt thee, Frere, and rest thee here,
Till I hither return again.
I know thine errand—dismount, dismount—
That errand for thee I'll do;
But, if thou stirrest till I return,
Such rashness thou shalt rue!

VIII.

"Then doff to me thy mantle white,
And eke thy hood of black;[11]
And crouch thee amid these brackens green,
To the left, till I come back."

"Oh! bethink thee, Knight!" the good Frere said,
"I should kneel by his couch and pray;
How awful it is for the soul of man
Unanneal'd to pass away!
How awful it is, with sins unshrived,
To pass from the bed of pain!
Caerbarrin's chief may a dead man be,
Ere thou comest hither again!"

IX.

He must needs obey—he durst not say nay,
That monk to the warrior stern;
His corslet unlaced, and his helm unbraced,
Down rattled among the fern:
And he hath mounted the Frere's good steed,
Clad in mantle and cowl he rode,
Till 'neath him, on its own green knoll
Caerbarrin's turrets glow'd. [12]
Caerbarrin! famed by History's pen
In Scotland's later day,
When Bothwell fled, and Mary was led
In weeping beauty away.

X.

The warder hail'd him from the keep,
As through the forest of oak he hied,
Now down the path, by the winding strath,
That leads from Chalkyside:—

"Speed, speed thee!" cried the porter old,
As the portals wide he threw;
"Speed, speed thee!" cried the sentinel,
The court as he pass'd through;
And "Speed thee!" echoed the seneschal,
As he showed the way before;
"For much I fear, most holy Frere,
That the struggle shall soon be o'er."

FITTE THIRD.

I.

Bright on Caerbarrin shines the sun;
But all within is woe and gloom,
For there Sir Malcolm bends in death—
Before him yawns the tomb!
Unfolded were the chamber doors,
Where moan'd he, stretch'd in prone decay;
And his rattling breath spake of coming death,
As life's sands ebb'd away.
But, when the mantled Monk he saw,
On his arm he strove to rise,
And the light, that erst was waning fast,
Flash'd back to his sunken eyes.

II.

"Welcome! holy Father," he said,
In accents fond, but low and weak—
"I would pour my sins in thy pitying ear,
And absolution seek;

For I have been a sinful man,
And repent me of my sin;
Yet, as pass the hopes of life away,
The terrors of death begin;
But chiefly would I tell to thee
My crime of the blackest dye,
Which a sea of tears might scarce wash out,
Though I could weep it dry!

III.

"A gentle ladye my kinsman loved,
And before he cross'd the sea,
To combat afar with the Saracen,
He trust reposed in me;
But a demon held my soul in thrall,
And evil thoughts within me brew'd;
So, instead of nursing her love for him,
Her hand for myself I woo'd.
I threw forth doubts, that only were
The coinage of my brain,
I praised her high fidelity,
Yet mourn'd that her love was vain!"

IV.

Upstarted the Frere;—"Ah! holy man,
Yet the worst I have not told;
In me—though sprung from noblest blood—
A perjured wretch behold!—

For my love that ladye no love return'd,
Although, with Hellish sleight,
We forged a cartel, whose purport show'd
That De Quincey had fallen in fight.
Yes! my suit that lofty ladye scorn'd—
More distant she look'd and cold;
And for my love no love return'd,
Though I woo'd her with gifts and gold!"

v.

Uprose the Frere;—"Nay, sit thee down—
Not mine was the guilt alone:
Father Francis was the clerke thereof,
And his Abbey is your own!
To fair Elena's hand that scroll he bore,
Then she folded her palms, and sigh'd;
And she said, 'Since true he has died to me,
I will be no other's bride!'
Still woo'd I her in her mourning weeds,
Till she show'd a poniard bare,
And wildly vow'd, if again I vex'd
Her heart, to plunge it there!

vi.

"Day after day, ray after ray,
She waned like an autumn sun,
When droop the flowers, 'mid yellow bowers,
And the waters wailing run:

Day after day, like a broken rosebud,
She wither'd and she waned,
Till, of her beauty and wonted bloom,
But feeble trace remain'd:
Then seem'd she, like some saintly form,
Too pure for the gazer's eye,
Melting away, from our earthly day,
To her element—the sky!

VII.

"She died—and then I felt remorse—
But how could I atone?
And I shook, when by her breathless corse
In silence I stood alone:
Yes! when I saw my victim lie,
Untimely, in her swathing shroud,
The weight of my burden'd conscience hung
Upon me like a cloud!
There was no light—and all was night,
And storm, and darkness drear;
By day 'twas joyless, and my sleep
Was haunted by forms of fear!

VIII.

"Lonely I stray'd, until, dismay'd,
I sought the feast, where mirth was none,
Only to find that man is mind,
And form and features dust alone.

Yes, of my kinsman oft I dreamt—
Of his woe and his vengeance dire,
Till yesternight he cross'd my sight,
Like a demon in his ire.
I had not heard of his home return—
Like a spectre there he stood—
Appall'd I sank, and his falchion drank
Deeply my forfeit blood.

IX.

"Oh! grant remission of my sins,
A contrite, humbled man I die!"
Ere yet the words were out, the monk
Beheld his glazing eye;
And rising away from the couch, he said—
"May Heaven forgive my vow!"
With horror thrill'd his yielding frame,
And he smote his bursting brow:
Then pass'd he from the chamber forth,
And in silence from the gate,
And off to the south, through the steep hill pass,
On his steed he journey'd straight.

X.

A weight of woe is at his heart,
Despair's grey cloud is on his brow,
For hope and fear both disappear
In that absorbing *now!*

The world is one vast wilderness,
Vain all its pomp, its honours vain;
De Quincey sigh'd, and onward pass'd
Slowly with slacken'd rein;
Thus wound he down through Cousland glen,
O'erhung with willows grey,
Until he came to the brackens green,
Wherein Father Francis lay.

XI.

"Ho! Frere, arise! Thy cloak and cowl
Have done their office meet."
Father Francis sprang from his lurking-place,
And stood at the warrior's feet.
"Now, tell me," cried De Quincey, fierce,
"For thou art learned in lore,
What the meaning of this riddle is
That a bird unto me bore,—
A lady in her chamber mourn'd,
Her true knight he was abroad,
Fighting afar with the Saracen,
Under the Cross of God!

XII.

"A false Friend, and a falser Frere,
Combined to shake her faith;
They forged—ah! wherefore dost thou fear?
Base caitiff, take thy death!"

The Knight he struck him to the heart;
Through the branches with a crash,
Down reel'd the corse, and in the swamp
Sank with a sullen dash.[13]
"Thus perish all who would enthrall
The guileless and the true;
Yet on head of mine no more shall shine
The sun from his path of blue!

XIII.

"No more on me shall pleasure smile—
A heartless, hopeless man;
The tempest's clouds of misery
Have darken'd for aye my span.
Farewell—farewell! my native land,
Hill, valley, stream, and strath;
And thou, who held my heart's command,
And ye who cross'd my path.
Blow, blow ye winds! in fury blow,
And waft us from this baleful shore;
Rise, rise, ye billows, and bear us along,
Who hither return no more!"[14]

THE MINER OF PERU.

Love's holy flame for ever burneth;
From Heaven it came, to Heaven returneth:
Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
At times deceived, at times oppress,
It here is tried and purified;
But hath in Heaven its perfect rest
It soweth here in toil and care,
But the harvest-time of Love is there.
SOUTHEY.

In that vast realm, where down the rivers wash
Gold from their channels, and the Andes vast
With serene foreheads look, while tempests brood,
And blacken with their shadows the hush'd vales,
Down on the wreathed clouds that girdle them,
Stands, in a spacious plain, Potosi famed,
With domes sublime, and obelisk, and spire,
Like a stone-guardian o'er the buried wealth,
Which Nature, at the moulding of the world,
Hid in her treasury there, deep in the dark.:
Not far remote, 'mid fragrant cassia groves,
With many a fig and olive tree between,
Luxurious, spreads a lake, whose shining waters,
Half-subterranean, 'gainst the tooth of Time
Have charmed influence, so that nought therein
Withers away, or rots into oblivion.

In the old time, a hundred years ago,
Where now to sunlight, and the face of heaven,
Gleams the blue deep, a spacious vale outspread,
Green-carpeted, and overgrown with shrubs,
Lavish of bloom and odours; but the Miner,
Dark Mammon's slave, mole-like, through year and year,
Had wrought beneath, emptying the silver bowels,
So that in earth were large and spacious halls,
Wide-sweeping stairs, and winding passages,
And many-chamber'd domes, lengthening around,
A palace for Pluto, on his upward journeys—
When sudden, on one summer morn, the shell
Crack'd, with earth-quaking violence; tree and rock,
Blossoming flower and shrub, all disappear'd,
Like Sodom and Gomorrah, as we read;
And to noonday the cavern'd waters raised
Their azure foreheads, bright as winter's stars,
And calm as innocent childhood, when it sleeps.

Husbands and sons, many and well beloved,
Age silver-hair'd, green boyhood, men mature,
Perish'd; yea, in the twinkling of an eye,
Perish'd in that vast ruin, when the roof
Of rock sank o'er them, and the prison'd waters
Rush'd in, like roaring lions, on their prey.

Through all Los Charcos valleys went the woe,
Darkening, like clouds, Potosi's many homes;
And, farther off, on Atacama sate,

Chuquisaco remote, and chacras lonely,[15]
Perch'd on the steep sides of the neighbouring hills,
As lonely as the condor's nests above them,
And scarcely more accessible to man.
Woe then was general as the air they breathed;
But there was one among the wretched mourners,
Perhaps more wretched than the rest—a girl
Fair as the aspect of serenest summer,
When but the zephyr stirs, and bloomy fields
Look up in beauty to the cloudless sky:
Her thoughts were all the breathings of bright hope,
Sanguine and passionate; but stepdame Fortune
Had sternly link'd her to a low estate;
And, with her sisters, lovely as herself,
Amid the valleys, flocks of richest fleece
She tended, on the sloping heights, or where
Over the stream arbutus hung, and gave
Delightful shelter from meridian heat.
Yet hers was happiness, for she did love—
Now in the bloom of sunny seventeen,
With pure and deep affection did she love
A miner youth. The nuptial day was set;
All for the joyous ceremony ready;
And he had bought her presents of bright feathers,
And trinkets emblematic of his passion,
So that both long'd—long'd for the affianced day,
A week scarce distant—(ah! what narrow bounds
Divide our joys from woe!)—when tidings came,
Even as she sat and sang before the door,
Amid the orange trees—the tidings came,

Telling of death, and clouding o'er the sky
Of her heart's hopes and happiness for ever!

Grief, for a while, within her bosom wrought,
Like fiery lightnings in the thunder-cloud;
And, in the tribulation of her heart,
She turn'd away, nor would be comforted!
So young, and yet so wretched; beautiful,
Yet withering in the rosebud of her beauty;
Scathed, while expanding to admiring eyes.
'Twas pitiful—but she did ask not pity:
Shunning communion, and the face of man,
And woman, to the groves and solitudes;
Sequester'd banks, magnolia-overgrown;
Empurpled valleys, prodigal of odours;
Woods lofty, and magnificent, and dim
With richness of o'erarching foliage,
And fruits display'd to woo the wanderer's hand,
Where humming-birds, like bees, piped cheerily,
An elfin sound, charming the listless air,
'Twas her delight to wander: morning there,
Looking in glory o'er the Andes' summits,
Beheld her footsteps; and the evening sun,
When landward breezes from the ocean sigh'd,
Threw back his parting radiance on her brow.

In her wild sorrow had she vow'd a vow,
Fervent and deep, of pure virginity;
And well that oath was kept. Years came and went,
Many and mournful all, but more serene;

And as, from sunset glow, the occident
Fades by degrees into a pensive calm,
Soothing and holy, so her soul, subdued
By Nature's kindly influences, partook
Mild resignation : on the past she gazed
As on a vision, brilliant but delusive ;
And, in the deep abstraction of her spirit,
She pictured, 'mid the future, stabler bliss,
With him, too early lost, in happier worlds.

Pass we the engulfing void of sixty years,
Then gaze on lorn Marilla.—Age's seal
Set on her wrinkled brow, the polish'd staff
Grasp'd in her palsied hand, the tottering step,
Proclaim'd Time's ravages, blancher of the hair,
And witherer of the strength, in silence eloquent.
How alter'd from Marilla, bright in youth,
Blithe as the lark at morning, when it springs
From the ripe maize ; lovely as lotus flower,
Wooing the dimpled current as it passes !

The summer had been sultry, and the rains
Set in ; the ceaseless showers fell deluge-like ;
Swam, in the valleys green, the gather'd flood ;
And streamlets, roaring down the mountain rifts,
Angry and swoln, and sweated into foam,
Kept ever pouring into them : at length
Sank down another portion of the hollow'd
And ore-embowell'd earth ; with gurgling noise
It sank, and, with wild eddying whirl, suck'd in

The tortured disappearing wave, as if
Deep in the dark recesses of the centre,
In his volcano prison-house immured,
Some Titan, boring through the fiery roof,
Had found at length a draught to cool his thirst.
When once again look'd forth the joyous sun
From the blue heaven, whose flood-gates were shut up,
And Nature, tranquillising from the shock,
Her calm serenity again resumed,
To gaze upon a scene so fraught with change,
Came many—nor amazement there sat idle!
For, lo! upon the waters floated men
In their last sleep[16]—it was a horrible sight—
And sounds arose, dismal as winds that sigh,
Darkling, round castled walls deserted long—
Yea, men unknown, some race of other days,
And there were many, all by death unchanged.
So strong had been the power preservative,
Mineral or petrous, of the charmed flood,
That, to the eye of man, a silent troop,
The unsepulchred of sixty years came forth,
Unchanged, as if by talismanic spell;
But, 'mid the congregated Guassos,[17] none
For kindred mourn'd or friends—each face was strange—
Antique the raiment; such as, in past times,
Mayhap their grandsires wore,
Marilla heard,
As in the solitude of years she sate,
The tidings which to all were as a riddle.
She heard—a strange smile lighted up her face,

And her eyes sparkled with unnatural light,
Like stars when frost ices the cloudless sky,
As if at once some truth flash'd on her soul,
As if at once her shoulders had thrown off
The weary burden of augmented years.
By the lake she stood, where, on the summer grass,
Lay the cold bodies, and she look'd at them;
One after one, she search'd with gaze intense;
And, each as she perused, her palms were clasp'd;
And o'er her furrow'd features came the glow
Of sudden recognition, like the sunshine
Breaking through morning clouds that girdle it.
At length she found the object of her search:
Even yet, though cold and colourless the cheek,
And ghastly all the flowing yellow hair,
And stiffen'd out in death the sinewy limb,
Fancy might picture out the handsome youth,
Tall, slender, yet robust.
Down on her knees
She dropp'd—she knelt beside the senseless corpse;
She chafed its temples with her wither'd palms;
She comb'd the matted tangles of its hair
With her thin fingers; and she bent her head,
Listening, in madden'd hope, to hear its breathing.
Now clasping, as in agony of soul,
Her hands on high, she threw herself upon it,
Now calling on the name she loved in youth;
And tears sprang forth, like fountains long damm'd up,
By their hot gush to ease her feeble brain!
'Twas pitiful, to see a woman old,

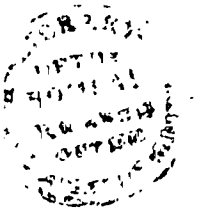
Whose hair was white as Chimborazo's snow,
Thus, when to earth held by a single hair,
Low prostrate in terrestrial wretchedness.
Over her soul the memory of past times
Vividly came, like objects seen at midnight
Through golden lightning; and, the frost of age
Thawing within her bosom for a moment,
The sensibilities of youth return'd;
His neck she bared, and there undid a string
Of silken tissue, whence depending hung,
Broken, a perforated golden coin,
Which, pressing to the other half, long lying
At her own bosom, to her lips she raised,
And cried, slow turning up her eyes to Heaven,
Fervently, as in confidence of spirit,—
"Thou art the witness of my truth—even Thou!
Nearest this lonely heart for sixty years—
All winters—and each drearier than the other—
This token have I worn, and shall till death!
Now may Thy aged servant die in peace!"

Beneath bananas tall, by nopal hedges
Verdantly girded, sleeps a placid churchyard,
With many a cross to scare unholy shapes,
On the hill-side, and there they buried him.
Evening and morning duly went Marilla,
Leaning on her smooth staff, to visit it;
For round his turf, flowers of all pleasant bloom
Had her hands planted, and she water'd them,
So that the fierce sun had on them no power

To wither; hours on hours there would she sit,
Musing and watchful, as in that fair spot
Her treasure had been buried; 'neath a dark
And aged cypress did she shelter her
From day's meridian power, and when the moon
Ascended o'er the forests into heaven,
Or restless fire-flies, 'mid the purple eve,
Sparkled like dropp'd gold on a monarch's robe.

Now summer's reign was ended, and the earth,
All prodigally lavish, shed its treasures,
Half undeserved, into the idler's hands,
Enrich'd beyond his hopes: the autumn came,
And in its scythed breeze dropp'd the sere leaves,
And the clouds darken'd, and the flowers all wither'd;
And, like the fading year, Marilla faded.

Scarce seem'd she to have died, so tranquilly
Lay on her closed eyes the poppied touch
Of death—but she was dead. Some peasants found her
Under a savin bush, stretch'd on the ground,
Beside the cherish'd grave of him she loved!



SIR ELIDUC.

A LAY OF MARIE.

He had a daughter of young age:
The shoon were gold upon her feet;
So white she was and fair of mood,
So is the snow on red blood.
Whereto should I that maid descrive?
She was the fairest thing on-live.
SIR REVIS OF HAMPTOUN.

FITTE FIRST.

I.

TOUCH ye the harp with tender hand,
And gently let its music flow,
While softly, sadly the Minstrel sings
An olden tale of love and woe:—
Three hundred years have come and gone,
As dewdrops shine and disappear,
Since first 'twas sung by fair Marie
To Henry's royal ear.

II.

The stately knight, young Eliduc,
As alone in hall he sate,
Beheld the page of Elizabeth,
At eve, beside his gate.
"Come hither—hither, thou page of court,
What would the King with me?"
The boy held the love-gifts on his arm,
As he lowly bent on knee.

III.

"I bear this gay gold ring, Sir Knight,
And robe of miniver;
Greets thee by these, my ladye bright,
And bids thee think of her."
To and fro strode Eliduc,
To and fro he paced the floor,
Then put the gift-ring on his hand,
And the robe his shoulders o'er.

IV.

To and fro strode Eliduc;
Anon with folded arms he stood;
Then brush'd the hall with hurried step,
Like one in doubtful mood.
At length he bit his nether lip,
Breathed deep, with downcast head;
For a moment paused in torturing thought,
To the boy then, sighing, said,—

V.

"Go back—haste back, my little foot-page,
To the palace straight repair,
And tell the Princess Elizabeth
That I will think of her."
The little page knelt, the little page rose
From the rushes whereon he knelt,
And hied him thence—but who may tell
What Eliduc then felt?

VI.

Brave Eliduc is woe-begone,
A cloud o'erhangs his eyes,
And though in fame he hath rivals none,
By the wild sea-shore he sighs.
He stands upon the barren rock,
He listens to the shrieking mew,
Until the evening star is out,
And earth is moist with dew.

VII.

But the King hath sent, the Knight is gone
Where he sat at chess in hall;
At the chequer-board play'd a stranger lord,
Behind stood his daughter tall.
"Why, daughter, dove Elizabeth,
Greet ye not this noble knight?
'Tis the same who hath our kingdom saved,
And quell'd our foes in fight."

VIII.

Elizabeth stretch'd forth her white soft hand,
And with Eliduc down she stray'd
By the tapestried wall of that long-arch'd hall,
While at board her father play'd.
In a window'd niche at length they stood,
The fair one and the brave,
Both sorrowful and in pensive mood,
Both silent as the grave;

IX.

Till the ladye faltering spake,—"Sir Knight,
Words are ill befitting me;
But were the world at my behest,
I would wed no mate but thee."
"Sweet princess fair," said Eliduc,
As he dropp'd her proffer'd hand,
"I am pledged by the oath of a leal true knight,
To return to my native land;

X.

"And thou knowest, flower, that not with me
Canst thou leave this realm to roam,
For thou art the sole child of its crown,
Which thou must wear at home."
"'Tis nay, 'tis nay, Sir Eliduc—
This heart is thine, this hand is free;
And if thou spurn'st me not away,
I will cross the waves with thee!"

XI.

She stood before him beautiful,
Like a lily pure by a lake;
With deep-drawn sighs, and dovelike eyes;
O, his heart was like to break!
"My bird of beauty," said Eliduc,
"I am summon'd across the sea;
But blithely sing in thy father's halls,
Till I come back for thee.

XII.

"O yes—O yes! my fair Princess,
In hopeful peace and pleasure rest."
Then the love-sick heart of Elizabeth
Leapt for joy within its nest;
And returning to her sire the king,
Sir Eliduc 'gan say,—
"To the shores of my native Brittanie
I am summon'd hence away.

XIII.

"Thy realm, great king, is now at rest;
Thy foes are all o'ercome;
While the jars and the wars of my own dear land
Call all her children home.
At the throne, where sign'd was my exile,
All the knaves who cross'd my way
Have own'd the shame of their perjured words,
And for my presence pray:

XIV.

"Well, well I knew the carpet knights
For their gentle selves should fear,
When o'er them gleam'd the Flanders axe,
"And Brabant's threatening spear."
"Sir Eliduc," replied the King,
"Thy worth may none gainsay;
In the gloom of war thou camest to us,
And leavest us peace to-day."

XV.

The King bade the royal galleys wait
At Totness, by the shore,
To the plains of France with sword and lance
To escort the brave knight o'er.
With golden gleam the pennants stream'd;
In foam the blue waves curl'd;
On deck stood the bearded halberdiers,
And the snow-white sails unfurl'd.

XVI.

From the echoing streets of Exeter
March'd a thousand men and more,
With banners, and unbeaver'd all,
Following Eliduc to the shore.
There is never a knight in Loegria
Can match with this stranger knight,
At feat of courtly tournament,
Or on blood-red field of fight.

XVII.

Elizabeth gazed from the turret high,
And she saw him on the plain
Departing 'mid bright clumps of spears,
While pages held each rein;
And toll the bells went, tant-a-roll;
And she heard the trampling crowd,
And the trumpets' bray, and the loud huzza,
And the neigh of a war-horse proud.

XVIII.

Passion and pride now lifted up
Her heart within her breast,
But doubt and fear anon drew near,
And down her spirit press'd;
Then, turning, she sank upon her couch,
And wrung her hands, and sighed,—
"O, would that Sir Eliduc were back
To woo me for his bride!

XIX.

"Like the rainbow to the clearing air,
Like the bird to the vernal tree,
Like spring's first flowers 'mid woodland bowers
To the honey-thirsting bee;
Like Salem to the pilgrim's sight,
When his feet are travel-sore,
Come the thoughts of thy return, dear love,
My longing spirit o'er!"

FITTE SECOND.

I.

O, sad was the song of Gildeluec
As she sate within her bower,
Beguiling, with her dulcimer,
The solitary hour.
"Was it a voice?" she rose and cried,
"Or what step comes here in quest?"
The door flew wide—'twas Sir Eliduc,
And she fell upon his breast.

II.

"Welcome, welcome! my husband dear!"
Aye she clasped his neck and cried;
"All heavy and drear have lagg'd the hours
Since thou didst sail the tide.
Bring wine and bread, let the board be spread,
Bid the silence of our halls rejoice!"
"Heaven bless thee, fair Gildeluec!"
Quod the knight, with a low sad voice.

III.

"And comest thou hither with heart of grief,
My lord, my loved?" the lady said.
"Thou know'st that our land is o'errun with foes,"
Sigh'd the knight, with downcast head.
"Thou art weary, and here wilt rest to-night,
And at morning to the king"——
"Nay," answer'd he, "I must leave this roof
Ere the bells of vesper ring."

IV.

"When life was young, Gildeluec,
To me thou gavest thy hand;
There was no flower like thee, sweet love,
In all this blooming land.
And dost thou call me cruel now?
Then surely am I changed;
Deem'st thou that broken is my vow,
Or my heart from thine estranged?"

V.

"As the snow," cried noble Gildeluec,
"On the Alps, I know thee pure;
Like the roots o' the everlasting hills,
Thy faith is firm and sure;
Then go—go—go to the battle-field,
'Tis thy country calls for thee;
When our foes have before thee fallen or fled,
Return to peace and me!"

VI.

His steed at the portal neighing paw'd;
Sir Eliduc donn'd his mail,
His figured casque, with its morion black,
And steel-barr'd aventayle.
He clasp'd her form—he snatch'd one kiss—
By their threshold cypress-tree;
Bade all the saints his dame to bless,
Then off through the woods rode he.

VII.

The nights they pass'd and the days they pass'd,
Heavy and lone they fell,
As Gildeluec pined for the bugle blast
Which her lord's return should tell.
Yet heard she how o'er vanquish'd foes
Had his banner victorious flown,
While the fame of his name, like a sweet west wind,
Through his native land was blown.

VIII.

Did the trumpet of battle arouse his heart,
As it aroused in days of yore?
Did he think of his mate, lone watching late,
For his coming, at her bower door?
No more—no more the battle toils
Did Sir Eliduc's bosom cheer;
And if he thought of Gildeluec,
'Twas with grief, and shame, and fear.

IX.

For o'er his soul, like an April gust,
To waken the young flowers driven,
Came the thoughts of Elizabeth, sad and pale,
Like a seraph that pined for Heaven.
He knew her lovely as May morning,
Pure, chaste, as the new-fallen snow;
And could he leave uncheer'd to break,
A heart that loved him so?

X.

To have told her of his wedded state,
When her heart and hopes were high;
To have told her of his Bretagne mate
Were to have bidden her die.
He mused on her matchless loveliness,
On her bright, bold, artless mind;
But alas! his heart, like Noah's dove,
No haven of rest could find!

FITTE THIRD.

I.

The barque is launch'd—before the prow
The hissing billows of foam divide;
And Sir Eliduc sails for Elizabeth,
Whatever fate betide.
Fresh blew the breeze—soon the waste wide seas
By that bounding barque were cross'd,
And at Totness, with the purple dawn,
He lay beside the coast.

II.

Beneath the sheltering rocks they moor'd,
In a wild lone woodland cove:
"Now haste thy message, page," he cried,
"To the ladye of my love,
And tell her that for her we wait,
'Mid this forest by the sea;
Linger till eve by the palace gate,
And hurry her thence with thee."

III.

Without stop or stay, the fleet page away
O'er moor and o'er meadow ran,
Till he saw young Elizabeth, 'mid the shrubs
And flowers of the palace lawn.
And he hath knelt and whisper'd there,
And she hath heard and sigh'd,—
Lo! he waits in the copse by the postern-gate
Till the grey of eventide.

IV.

When but one star shone like a torch
On departing daylight's tomb,
To the wistful page she comes—she came
Like an angel through the gloom.
With light quick step like a startled fawn,
She hasten'd her through the grove,
A short, warm mantle, with ermined fringe,
Thrown her splendid dress above.

V.

With harness bright for the path bedight,
The ready palfrey stood;
The page seized hold of the silken rein,
And away they hied through the wood.
'Neath the linden tree watch'd Eliduc,
Behind was moor'd his barque;
But he leapt to his feet when Elizabeth
Came riding up through the dark.

VI.

"Welcome, welcome, my love, my life!"—
In a moment, within his arms
Lay the heaving breast of the young princess,
In the bloom of her virgin charms.
"To sea, to sea, my mariners!"
The white sails are unfurl'd;
Behind the barque the land withdrew,
Before the white waves curl'd.

VII.

O, bliss of bliss—a lovely night!—
The winds breathed gently free,
The stars, a galaxy of light,
Shower'd fire upon the sea;
And on and on, they bore and bore,
The beauteous and the brave,
Till green Bretagne displayed its shore,
Like a cloud above the wave.

VIII.

Sudden changed the sky—a tempest fierce
Fell brooding; and lo! the gale,
Like an evil spirit from Hell let loose,
Split the mast and rent the sail.
And the mountain waves rear'd their crested heads,
And the lightnings scorch'd the sky,
And the mariners on their patron saints
In supplication cry.

IX.

But from the helm, with upraised arm
An old man leapt, and said,—
"On St Clement and St Nicolas, sirs,
In vain ye call for aid,—
On Mary Mother in vain ye call—
All, Sir Eliduc, for thee
Hath the wrath of Heaven o'ertaken us;
Throw thy paramour in the sea,—

X.

"And return, return to thy wedded wife!"
"Wedded wife!" pale Elizabeth cried,
With a shriek gave up her startled life,
And fell dead by his side.
He held her wrist—her lips he kiss'd—
No word his fate deplored;
But Sir Eliduc seized the old man's waist,
And toss'd him overboard.

XI.

'Twas silence all: the wild winds fell,
And the clouds dispersed away;
All the stars grew pale, save the morning star
That heralded the day:
With a bubbling groan the old man sank;
The mariners sat with in-drawn breath;
To Bretagne's shore the vessel bore—
'Twas like a ship of death.

XII.

'Twas silence all: the brightening east
Proclaim'd the coming day;
With many a shriek, from crag and creek
The sea-mews skimm'd the bay;
While sad and silent they glide along
Till the beetling shore they reach,
Then, with dead Elizabeth in his arms,
Strode Eliduc from the beach.

FITTE FOURTH.

I.

"Why mournest thou thus, Sir Eliduc?
What is thy cause of woe?
Why these stifled sighs and heavy eyes?
Sure of yore it was not so;
And why so often, Sir Eliduc,
Dost thou thread the woods alone?"
The knight look'd up on Gildeluec,
But answering word spake none.

II.

The knight was a gallant knight, the first
In battle-field or festive hall;
The knight is an alter'd man, he hangs
His cuirass on the wall:
Within its kennel yells the hound;
The prison'd falcon pines away;
The steed neighs from his stall, as if
To chide his lord's delay.

III.

At peep of morn, 'mid thick green woods,
Sir Eliduc to stray is gone;
There is no music in human voice—
He loves to be alone.
At fall of eve, 'neath the rising moon,
Through the tangled walks he strays;
The heart of Gildeluec almost broke
To behold his alter'd ways.

IV.

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,"
To her page the ladye said,
"Thou must after thy sorrowing master go,
And track him through the glade."
The page he went, the page he came;
By her bower the ladye stood—
"What news, what news, my faithful lad,
Bringest thou from dark green wood?"

V.

"From turn to turn," replied the page,
"I lurk'd Sir Eliduc's path to see;
And at length he enter'd the hermit's cell,
Beneath the chestnut tree;
And while he mourn'd that cell within,
I listen'd the door beside,
And heard him say,—'O, murder'd love,
Would for thee that I had died!

VI.

"'To me thou gavest thy love, for me
Didst leave thy father's land;
And I have given thee but a grave
Upon this foreign strand!
And oh! and oh! had'st thou but seen,
And loved some worthier mate;
And oh! for thy hapless death, and oh!
My miserable fate!'"

VII.

Sir Eliduc came home—he sate
With his elbow leant on knee;
He spoke not a word of wail, nor sigh'd,
Though bow'd to earth was he.
"Oh, tell me why, Sir Eliduc,
Thou peak'st, and pin'st, and roam'st astray?"—
"Ask the tree, by the forky lightnings scathed,
Why wither its boughs away!

VIII.

"Ask the forest oak why down it falls
Beneath the woodman's stroke;
Ask life, when death the tyrant calls,
Why it yields to such a yoke."
Through the wood, in morning's solitude,
Gildeluec roam'd alone,
And knock'd at the door of the hermitage,
But answer back came none.

IX.

With a beating heart, and trembling hand,
The wicket latch she raised,
And in as she went, with timid eyes,
Through its twilight gloom she gazed.
Why starts she back? She sees a couch
With coverlet of snow;
She lifted it up in her wonderment,
And a lady slept below!

X

She slept—but 'twas the sleep of death.
Ah! nothing could compare
With the sparkling of her jewell'd robes,
And the pearls in her raven hair,
Save her form—and that was quite divine!
She look'd as of Heaven she dream'd,
While the lustre of her loveliness
Like a halo round her stream'd.

XI.

But waned from her lip was the cherry red;
Her silk robe was her swathing shroud;
And her eyes were closed in dim eclipse,
Like stars behind a cloud.
Was nought on earth so beautiful!
Gildeluec sigh'd,—"Ah me!
No wonder, seeing what thou hast been,
My lord's heart turn'd to thee!

XII.

"Then farewell love—and farewell ye,
The vanities of life!
O would, fair light, that thou hadst lived
To shine his peerless wife!
As it is, I'll love the sun no more,
Let to others his beams be given;
I'll seal mine ears to the sounds of earth,
And give my heart to Heaven!"

XIII.

The cloister hath another nun,
The gentlest, purest, holiest there;
Before the crucifix, morn and eve,
She kneels in fervent prayer:
Her thoughts are of the things above,
Her dreams have all a blest abode,
Where, 'midst the bowers of Paradise,
White angels walk with God.

XIV.

Sir Eliduc sits in a lonely home;
He hath built a marble tomb,
And within it laid the foreign maid
In the wild wood's central gloom;
With railings of gold he hath railed it round,
Beside the hermit's mossy cell;
He hath lock'd it with a silver key,
And bidden a last farewell.

XV.

'Twas a lone, sequester'd place; thro' boughs
The sky o'erhead was seen;
And wild vines ran the stems about,
And festooning ivy green;
'Twas a favourite haunt for nightingales,
Singing the moonlight through;
And by day the living emerald shade
Echo'd the stock-dove's coo.

XVI.

'Twas one of Nature's shrines: the birds
And beasts came flocking there—
The golden pheasant, and vocal lark,
And squirrel, and hart, and hare;
But scarce a footstep breaks the gloom,
The long still season lone;
Rains, winds, and sunbeams kiss the tomb—
But Sir Eliduc is gone!

XVII.

The war-steed neighs—but not from stall—
Caparison'd by the gate;
The cuirass hangs not on the wall,
As it hath hung of late:
His own keen hands have wiped away
The red rust from his sword,
Which again sends out a silvery gleam,
As if it knew its lord.

XVIII.

'Twas a glorious, glowing September eve,
As the knight rode down the dale;
The broad low sun shone along the land,
And kiss'd his burnish'd mail;
Hawk, hound, and horse roam masterless—
His serving-men grow grey—
His roofs are moss'd;—'tis twenty years
Since the warrior went away!

XIX.

A thousand friends had Sir Eliduc—
The brave, the noble, and the wise;
And each asks each, but of his fate
No answering tongue replies.
Arm'd cap-a-pie went Eliduc,
From his proud ancestral towers alone;
But whither he went, or where he died,
By man was never known!

NOTES TO TALES.

1.

Only to find the Scottish strand
For him no fitting home.—P. 147.

ROBERT DE QUINCEY, a Northamptonshire baron, acquired the manor of Travernent, (*vulgo*, Tranent,) which in the reign of David the First had been held by Swan, the son of Thor, soon after the accession of William the Lion; and he served for some time as justiciary to that monarch. At the end of the twelfth century he was succeeded in his immense estates by his son, Soyer de Quincey, the hero of the ballad, who set out for Palestine in 1218, where he died in the year following.

2.

And o'er the Dragon spouting fire,
The battle word, "Set on!"—P 151.

"*Intaminatis fulget honoribus,*" was the proud motto of the Seton family.

The original Seton arms were three crescents with a double tressure, flowered and counter-flowered with fleurs-de-lis. A sword supporting a royal crown was afterwards given by Robert the Bruce, for the bravery and loyalty of the family during the succession wars. At a later period, three garbs azure were quartered with the Seton arms, by George, the second lord of that name.

"This lord George," saith old Sir Richard Maitland, "tuk the armes of Buchan, quhilk ar thrè cumming schevis, quar-

terlie wyth his awin armes, allegeand himself to be air of the said erldome, be ressoun of his gudedame."—*Chronicle of the Hous of Seytoun*, p. 37.

The crest was a green dragon spouting fire surmounting a ducal coronet, with the words over it, "*Set on.*" The supporters were two foxes collared and chained.

3.

The tower of high Falsyde.—P. 152.

Sir Robert Sibbald, in his *History of Fife*, quotes a charter by the Earl of Winchester to Adame de Seton, 1246, *De Maritagio hereædis Alani de Fawside*, from which, as well as from some incidental passages in Maitland's *History of the Hous of Seytoun*, it is evident that Falsyde Castle was a heritage of the younger branches of the Seton family. It was first acquired by them from intermarriage with the De Quinceys.

The date of Falsyde Castle is uncertain. It was burned by the English under the Duke of Somerset, 1547, the day following the fatal battle of Pinkie. The strength of the mason-work, however—the tower being arched at the top of the building, as well as at the first story—prevented its entire demolition. Paton, in his *Diary*, gives a very cool description of the burning to death of its little garrison, and calls it "a sorry-looking castle." In 1618, the family of Fawside of that Ilk appear to have removed to a more modern mansion in the immediate vicinity, which has the initials J. F., J. L., above one of its windows. The dovecot of the ancient fortalice still remains; and within it is a curious place of concealment, secured by an antique grated door. There is a similar hole of secrecy in the staircase of the oldest part of the castle.

It is now the property of Sir George Grant Suttie of Prestongrange and Balgone, having descended to him through his maternal ancestors, the Setons, Earls of Hyndford.

4.

And the hill-fox to the Roman Camp.—P. 155.

The Parish of Newbottle rises from its extremities—Fordel House and Newbyres Tower—till it terminates in a ridge of considerable extent, termed the Roman Camp, the elevation of which is 680 feet. The neighbourhood abounding in hares, the

Roman Camp is a favourite meeting-place of the Mid-Lothian Coursing Club. From antlers found in the neighbourhood, and even at Inveresk, no doubt can exist that, at the era of our ballad, the hart and hind were visitants of at least the Morthwaite hills.

5.

Stole up from Hawthornden.—P. 155.

The building of Roslin Castle is anterior to the dawn of authentic record. "Its origin," says Chalmers, (*Caledonia*, vol. ii. p. 571,) is laid in fable." According to Adam de Cardonnel, (*Picturesque Antiquities*,) William de Sancto Claro, son of Waldernus Compte de St Claro, who came to England with William the Conqueror, obtained from King Malcolm Canmore a grant of the lands and barony of Roslin. Hawthornden and Roslin are associated with many bright names in literature—Drummond, Ben Jonson, Ramsay, Macneil, Scott, Wilson, and Wordsworth.

6.

From grey Caerbarrin's walls he came.—P. 156.

Chalmers traces back the name "*Caerbairin*" to the time of the ancient Britons, and instances the modern one "*Carberry*," to show how English adjuncts have been engrafted on British roots.

Every reader of Scottish history will remember that it was on the rising ground above the fortalice of Carberry that Mary and Bothwell awaited the approach of the confederate lords, and that there they parted, never to meet again.

7.

By Smeaton Shaw, through Colden Wood,
And up thy royal way, Derstrette.—P. 156.

During the Scoto-Saxon period, the king's highways are often mentioned in chartularies as local boundaries. In that of Newbottle we find reference made to a *regia via*, leading from the village of Ford to the Abbey, in a charter of Hugh Riddel, in the time of Alexander III., (chart. 22.) The king's highway from the same Abbey to Edinburgh in 1252 is also here mentioned, (16;) and Gervaise, the abbot, in his charter, (*Ib.* 163,)

alludes to a certain road called *Derstrette*, near Colden, in the district of Inveresk. Near the same locality there is now a place called *D'Arcy*, which I have little doubt is a corruption of the ancient appellation.

8.

The Abbey's grand and massive walls
Were 'mid its groves espied.—P. 156.

Newbottle Abbey was beautifully situated on the banks of the South Esk, nearly on the same site as the modern mansion of the Marquis of Lothian, who is a descendant of the last abbot. It was founded by that "sore saint for the crown," King David I., in the year 1140. "The monks," says Bishop Keith, "were brought from Melrose, together with their abbot, Radulphus. Patrick Madort, a learned divine, who is mentioned from the year 1462 until 1470, recovered a great number of original writs and charters belonging to this place, which were transcribed into a chartulary, which is now in the Advocates' Library."—*Religious Houses*, p. 417. Ed. 1824.

The only relics of antiquity now about the place, are the remains of the stone enclosure which surrounded the Abbey, still called Monkland Wall—a striking and venerable gateway, surmounted by its time-worn lions; a solemn line of yew-trees; and a doorway, amid the lawn to the east, said to be the entrance of a subterranean passage to the old Abbey.

Many of the trees in the park are beautiful and majestic, especially some of the planes and elms; and a beech, in the neighbourhood of the house, measures twenty-two feet in circumference, at a yard from the ground. It contains nine hundred cubic feet of wood, and its branches cover a circle of thirty-three feet diameter.

The remains of monastic architecture now seen at Newbottle are said to have been brought by the late Marquis from the ruins at Mount Teviot. They are beautiful and interesting.

We should also state, in referring to the antiquities of the place, that a little below the Abbey there is a venerable bridge over the Esk, rudely built, and overspread with ivy, which has long survived all accounts of its age and founder.

The present parish of Newbottle consists of the ancient parish of Maisterton, and the Abbey parish. During the Scoto-Saxon period, the patronage of Maisterton was possessed by the lord of the manor. Near the end of the thirteenth century this belonged to Robert de Rossine, knight, whose

daughters, Mariot and Ada, resigned it to the monks of Newbottle, with two-thirds of their estates.

9.

Upon his bosom lay the Book.—P. 157.

"Much he marvell'd a knight of pride
Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride."

So says Sir Walter Scott, (*Lay*, canto iii. stanza 8,) and, in annotation, quotes from a MS. Account of Parish of Ewes, apud Macfarlane's MSS. :—"At Unthank, two miles north-east from the church, (of Ewes,) there are the ruins of a chapel for divine service in time of Popery. There is a tradition that friars were wont to come from Melrose or Jedburgh, to baptise and marry in this parish; and, from being in use to carry the mass-book in their bosoms, they were called by the inhabitants '*Book-a-bosomes.*'"

10.

And now Dalcaeth behind him lay.—P. 158.

Dalcaeth, in the Celtic, means the narrow dale.—*Vide* Richard and Owen's Dictionary, *in voce* Caeth. Dalkeith, as a parish, does not appear in the ancient *Taxatio*. Indeed, as such, it did not then exist; but as the manor of Dalkeith, as well as that of Abercorn, was granted by David I. to William de Grahame, it is easily to be supposed that, being an opulent family, they had a chapel to their court. "No memorial remains of the Grahames, unless the fading tradition of the place, and two curious but wasted tombstones, which lie within the circuit of the old church. They represent knights in chain armour, lying cross-legged upon their monuments, like those ancient and curious figures on the tombs in the Temple Church, London."—*Provincial Antiquities of Scotland.* From *Robertson's Index*, 40-44, and from the *Douglas Peerage*, 489, we find, that in the reign of David II., John de Grahame of Dalkeith resigned the manor, with its pertinents, to William Douglas, the heir of Sir James Douglas of Lothian, in marriage with his daughter Margaret. Dalcaeth is first written Dalkeith in a charter of Robert the Bruce. It is proper to mention, however, that Froissart, who himself visited the Earl of Douglas at his castle of Dalkeith, has the following passage, in mentioning the single combat between the Earl and Sir Henry Percy, at the

barriers of Newcastle. The former having, by force of arms, won the banner of the latter, is thus made to say:—"I shall bear this token of your prowess into Scotland, and shall set it high on my castle of Dalkeith, (D'Alquest,) that it may be seen afar off."—*Froissart*, (Berners' Reprint, 1812,) vol. ii. p. 393.

11.

Then doff to me thy mantle white,
And eke thy hood of black.—P. 158.

The monks of Newbottle were of the Cistertian order. "They were called *Monachi Albi*," says Cardonnel, "to distinguish them from the *Benedictines*, whose habit was entirely black; whereas the Cistertians wore a black cowl and scapular, and all their other clothes were white. They had the name of *Cistertians*, from their chief house and monasteries, Cistertium in Burgundy; and *Bernardines*, from St Bernard, who, with a number of his followers, retired to the monastery, and was afterwards called Abbot of Clairvoux."—*Picturesque Antiquities*, part i. pp. 12, 13; and Keith's *Scottish Bishops*, p. 415.

There were thirteen monasteries of the Cistertian order in Scotland, among which were Melrose, Dundrennan, Culross, Sweetheart, and Glenluce.

12.

Caerbarrin's turrets glow'd.—P. 159.

The ancient history of the lands of Carberry is lost in obscurity. The lower rooms of the square tower are strongly arched, and evidently of great age. At the time of the Duke of Somerset's expedition it was the property of Mr Hugh Rigg, the king's advocate, who is more than once mentioned in the histories of Knox and Pitscottie. We observe also, from the *Inquisitiones Speciales*, that the property was conveyed to several subsequent generations of the same family—from whom it passed to the Dicksons—of whom we find that, during the Rebellion of 1745, Sir Robert was chief bailie of Musselburgh.

The assumption of the Lords of this wealthy district having been donators to the Abbey of Newbottle, however unwarranted by record, is far from unlikely, the practice having been a common one with the wealthy for very weighty reasons.

In 1184, as we learn from the chartulary of Newbottle, (71,) Robert de Quincey, the father of our hero, granted to the

monks of the abbey the lands of Preston, where they formed an agricultural establishment—hence called Prestongrange—with common of pasture for ten sheep, and a sufficiency of oxen to cultivate their grange. Seyer de Quincy confirmed to the monks all these privileges gifted by his father, by which confirmation we learn that their lands of Preston were bounded on the west by the rivulet of Pinkie, in his manor of Traverneut.

A curious fact is also ascertained by these charters of the De Quinceys, which is the date at which coals were first worked in Scotland; and, in contradiction to the pretensions of Fifeshire, this appears to have taken place on this spot. The charter of Robert grants to the monks the right of *digging peats* and of *cutting wood* for fuel; whereas, in that of his son Seyer, we find the addition of "*carbonarium et quarrarium*," with free access to and recess from the same by the sea.

"This charter," (that of Seyer,) says Chalmers in his erudite *Caledonia*, vol. ii. p. 486, "must necessarily have been granted between the years 1202 and 1218, as it is witnessed by William, who became Bishop of St Andrews in 1202, and was granted by Seyer de Quincey, who set out for the Holy Land in 1218, where he died in the subsequent year."

From Keith's *Scottish Bishops*, p. 15, we learn that William Malvoisine was translated from the see of Glasgow to that of St Andrews in 1202. It is also added, on the authority of the *Chart. of Dunfermline*, that he was "contemporary with Pope Honorius and Sayerus de Quincey."

In connexion with the same family, we also find from the Chartulary of Newbottle, that Elena, the youngest daughter of Roger de Quincey, the Constable of Scotland, married Alan la Zouche, an English baron, and that in the division of his great estates among his three daughters, the barony of Heriot fell to her share; and that, in her great liberality, she granted to the monks of Newbottle the church of "Heryeth," with the tithes and other rights.—(*Chart.* 270.)

The lands themselves of Heryeth were afterwards acquired by the monks; but whether from the liberality of Elena, or from her son La Zouche, who lost his estates in the succession wars, does not appear.

Such transfers of property to religious houses were of common occurrence. We have already alluded to the cession of Maisterton, by the daughters of Sir Robert de Rossine—Mariot, who married Neil de Carrick, and Ada, the wife of Gilbert de Ayton—in 1320; and from the chartulary of Newbottle we learn that the monks had various lands in Clydesdale, in order

to have easy access to which, they obtained, from various proprietors in Mid and West Lothian, special grants of free passage to these distant granges.—(*Chart.* 218-227, 240.)

In conclusion, we may add, as showing the extensive possessions at this early period of the De Quincey family, that Roger de Quincey, Earl of Winton, gave also to the canons of Dryburgh a toft "*in villa de Haddintune.*"—(*Chart. Dryb.* 106.)

13.

Down reel'd the corse, and in the swamp
Sank with a sullen dash.—P. 166.

Cousland Dean, a ravine of considerable depth, which commences where the highway from Dalkeith branches off towards Pathhead on the right, and towards Inveresk on the left, although now partially drained, shows every indication of having been in the olden time a wide and extensive morass; and, at its narrowest points, is still spanned by two bridges, one of considerable antiquity. Indeed, the traces of the watercourse are still evident from behind Chalkyside, on the west, running eastwards along the hollow, midway between Elphinstone Tower and Cousland Park, where it still assumes the form of a rivulet.

14.

Rise, rise, ye billows, and bear us along,
Who hither return no more!—P. 166.

In the grants made by Seyer de Quincey to the Abbey of Newbottle, mention is made of "his baronies of Preston and Tranent, bounded on the west by the rivulet of Pinkie." We find also that Falsyde and Elphingston were in his possession; and he is elsewhere styled Earl of Wyntoun, (*Caledonia*, vol. ii. 486, note 6,) a proof that the barony of that name formed also a part of his immense possessions. It is not a little curious, therefore, that a charter of King William, the brother of Malcolm surnamed the Maiden, should be still extant, wherein, in the thirteenth year of that monarch's reign, he makes *confirmation* to Phillip de Seytuhe of the lands of Seytoune, Wintoun, and Wincholburgh, (*nunc* Winchburgh,) "quhilk," as Sir Richard Maitland observes, (*Historie*, p. 17,) "was auld heretage of befor, as the said charter testifies."

"Willielmus, Dei gra. rex Scotorum, &c. Sciatis presentis et futuri, me concessisse, et hac carta mea confirmasse, Phillipo de Seytune, terram *quæ fuit patris sui;* scilicet, Seytune, et Wintune, et Winchilburgh, tenendam sibi et hæredibus suis de me et hæredibus meis, in fædo et hæreditate," &c.

Philip de Seytune was succeeded, on his death, by his son Alexander; and, by another singular preservation, we have, in the forty-sixth year of the same king, another royal charter of infeftment of the same lands. It is nearly in the same words; and, strange to say, two of the witnesses to it are Robert de Quincey and Henry de Quincey. Both of these charters are printed in Dr M'Kenzie's *Lives of the Scottish Writers.* They have also been transcribed by the author, or rather compiler, of the *Diplomata Scotiæ,* which transcripts are still preserved, being now, or lately, in the possession of Mr Dillon, a member of the Maitland Club.

In the succession wars, the De Quincey family took side with Baliol, and the Setons with Bruce. Sir Christopher (or Chrystal) Seton saved the life of that great man at the disastrous battle of Methven, and afterwards married his sister. On the accession of Bruce to the throne, the estates of the De Quinceys, being declared forfeited, were conferred on the Setons; and in Sir Richard Maitland's *Chronicle* we find that "the said King Robert gave to the said Alexander [Seton] the barony of Tranent, with the tenendury thairof for the time, viz. Falsyde mylis and Elphinstoune, as the charteris testifiis, geven thairupoun." The "landis of Dundas and Cragye" were also bestowed upon him, "for service done by his father and himsèlf, with the landes and barony of Barnis, aboue Hadingtoun, with dyuers uther landis, quhilk I omit for schortnes."—*Glasgow Reprint,* 1829, p. 21.

For centuries the name of De Quincey hath perished from out the rich and extensive district which owned its sway; and, in contemplating the destinies of this once great family, how apposite is the exclamation of Claudian—

—"Tolluntur in altum,
Ut lapsu graviore ruant!"

15.

Chacras lonely.—P. 169.

The farm-steading of the South American agriculturist.

16.

———*Upon the water's floated men*
In their last sleep.—P. 172.

This story is not altogether fanciful, but is founded on an incident said to have occurred within these five or six years in Sweden. The scene is transferred to another hemisphere, on account of the superior advantages afforded for poetical illustration.

17.

The congregated Guassos.—P. 172.

Chilian peasantry.—Captain Basil Hall has lately put the public in possession of a most interesting account of their habits and peculiar modes of life.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE OLD SEAPORT.

(CULROSS, PERTHSHIRE.)

I.

When winds were wailing round me,
And Day, with closing eye,
Scowled from beneath the sullen clouds
Of pale November's sky,—
In downcast meditation
All silently I stood,
Gazing the wintry ocean's
Rough, bleak, and barren flood.

II.

A place more wild and lonely
Was nowhere to be seen;
The caverned sea-rocks beetled o'er
The billows rushing green;
There was no sound from aught around,
Save, 'mid the echoing caves,
The plashing and the dashing
Of the melancholy waves.

III.

High, 'mid the lowering waste of sky,
The grey gulls flew in swarms;
And far beneath the surf upheaved
The sea-weed's tangly arms;
The face of Nature in a pall
Death-shrouded seemed to be,
As by St Serf's lone tomb arose
The dirges of the sea.[1]

IV.

In twilight's shadowy scowling,
Not far remote there lay
Thine old dim harbour, Culross,
Smoky, and worn, and grey;[2]
Through far-back generations
Thy blackened piles had stood,
And, though the abodes of living men,
All looked like solitude.

V.

Of hoar decrepitude all spake,
And ruin and decay;
Of fierce, wild times departed;
Of races passed away;
Of quaint, grim vessels beating up
Against the whelming breeze;
Of tempest-stricken mariners,
Far on the foamy seas.

VI.

It spake of swart grey-headed men,
Now dust within their graves,
Who sailed with Barton or with Spens,
To breast the trampling waves ;[3]
And how, in shallops picturesque,
Unawed they drifted forth,
Directed by the one bright star,
That points the stormy North.

VII.

And how, when windows rattled,
And strong pines bowed to earth,
Pale wives, with trembling children mute,
Would cower beside the hearth,—
All sadly musing on the ships,
That, buffeting the breeze,
Held but a fragile plank betwixt
The sailor and the seas.

VIII.

How welcome their return to home!
What wondrous tales they told,
Of birds with rainbow plumage,
And trees with fruits of gold ;
Of perils in the wilderness,
Beside the lion's den ;
And huts beneath the giant palms,
Where dwelt the painted men!

IX.

'Mid melancholy fancies
My spirit loved to stray,
Back thro' the mists of hooded Eld,
Lone wandering, far away;
When dim-eyed Superstition
Upraised her eldritch croon
And witches held their orgies
Beneath the waning moon.

X.

Yes! through Tradition's twilight,
To days had Fancy flown
When Canmore or when Kenneth dree'd
The Celt's uneasy crown;
When men were bearded savages,
An unenlightened horde,
'Mid which gleamed Cunning's scapulaire,
And War's unshrinking sword.

XI.

And, in their rusty hauberks,
Throng'd past the plaided bands;—
And slanting lay the Norsemen's keels
On ocean's dreary sands;—
And, on the long flat moorlands,
The cairn, with lichens grey,
Mark'd where their souls shriek'd forth in blood,
On Battle's iron day.

XII.

Between me and the sea, loomed out
The ivied Abbey old,
In whose grim vaults the Bruces kneel
In marble quaint and cold;[4]
And where, inurned, lies hid the heart
Of young Kinloss deplored,
Whose blood, by Belgium's Oster-Scheldt,
Stain'd Sackville's ruthless sword.[5]

XIII.

Waned all these trancèd visions;—
But, on my eerie sight,
Remained the old dim seaport
Beneath the scowl of night;
The sea-mews for their island cliffs
Had left the homeless sky,
And only to the dirgeful blast
The wild seas made reply.

THE CONTADINA.

I.

Most cheerful Contadina!—thy lapsing years glide o'er,
Serenely, like the elfin waves that melt on Nemi's shore;
Thy heart is full of pleasant thoughts, thy tongue is void of guile,
The eloquence of purest truth effulges in thy smile;
No dark malignant passions break thy bosom's chaste repose,
But softest sleep and sweetest dreams thy tranquil spirit knows;
Through sunny day and starry night propitious fates decree
Whate'er of brightest, blithest, best, the world contains, for thee!

II.

Most lovely Contadina!—in thy sparkling, speaking eye,
Gleams the purity and depth of thine own Italian sky;
In rings of glossy brightness thy raven locks hang down;
And what although the day-star's glow hath tinged thy cheek with brown?—
It takes not from thy beauty's dower, but seems to lend a charm,
When stealthily a glimpse we gain of thy snowy neck and arm;
For in thy locks, and lips, and eyes, and witching form, we see
That earth has showered, with lavish hand, her choicest gifts on thee!

III.

Most generous Contadina!—thy hospitable home
Still, with its open porch, invites the passer-by to come;
The kneaded cake, the fragrant milk, the vegetable store
Of herbs and fruits thy garden yields, and vine-encircled door,
What though they deck a humble board?—he lays his welcome head,
A light and cheerful supper o'er, upon his rushy bed;

And when, beneath the opal morn, the wild birds carol free,
Thou speed'st him on his path, while flows his blessing back to thee!

IV.

Most gentle Contadina!—thou breath'st Ausonian air,
Where Nature's face is, like thine own, serenely fresh and fair;
Thou sittest by azure lakelets, where the sportive fishes leap,
Around thee groves, above thee vine-clad ruins on the steep;
Thou sing'st and twirl'st thy distaff, while beside thee sleep or play
Thy loveliest children, pleasure-tired, in the blue light of day;
While on the turf the household fawn, beneath the threshold tree,
Turns, listening to thy syren notes, her floating eyes on thee!

V.

Most simple Contadina!—although around thee lie
Pride's scattered wrecks, and o'er thee glows the Roman's classic sky,
Although thou know'st not Arria's fate, how home-sick Clelia fled,
In purity how Portia shone, and how Lucretia bled,

Yet is thy duty daylight task, for Nature's torch within
The beauty and the blot displays of sanctity and sin;
And what to most is weary toil, as perfume leads the bee,
Silent, spontaneous feeling tells, and kindness teaches thee.

VI.

Most pious Contadina!—from earth-caught errors shriven,
The steadfast anchor of thy hope, through faith, is fixed on Heaven;
Thou know'st that He who bled for man can for thy faults atone;
Thou feel'st that He thy soul can free with ransom not its own:
In the calm of peace thou kneelest down, outpouring songs of praise;
Or if the storm of sorrow comes to overcloud thy days,
Unto thy Rock of refuge still 'tis thine for aid to flee,
And, if denied on earth, still shines Heaven's star of bliss for thee!

THE WINTER WILD.

I.

How sudden hath the snow come down!
Last night the new moon show'd her horn,
And, o'er December's moorland brown,
Rain on the breeze's wing was borne;
But, when I ope my shutters, lo!
Old Earth hath changed her garb again,
And with its fleecy whitening Snow
O'ermantles hill and cumbers plain.

II.

Bright Snow, pure Snow, I love thee well,
Thou art a friend of ancient days;
Whene'er mine eyes upon thee dwell,
Long-buried thoughts 'tis thine to raise:
Far—to remotest infancy—
My pensive mind thou hurriest back,
When first, pure blossoms of the sky,
I watch'd to earth your mazy track—

III.

And upward look'd, with wondering eyes,
To see the heavens with motion teem,
And butterflies, a thousand ways,
Down flaking in an endless stream;
The roofs around, all clothed with white,
And leafless trees with feathery claws,
And horses black with drapery bright—
O, what a glorious sight it was!

IV.

Each season had its joys in store,
From out whose treasury boyhood chose:
What though blue Summer's reign was o'er,
Had Winter not his storms and snows?
The Giant then aloft was piled,
And balls in mimic war were toss'd,
And thumps dealt round in trickery wild,
As felt the passer to his cost.

V.

The wintry day was as a spell
Unto the spirit—'twas delight
To note its varying aspects well,
From dawn to noon, from noon to night,
Pale morning on the hills afar,—
The low sun's ineffectual gleam,—
The twinkling of the Evening Star
Reflected in the frozen stream:

VI.

And when the silver moon shone forth
O'er lands and lakes, in white array'd,
And dancing in the stormy North
The red electric streamers play'd;
'Twas ecstasy, 'neath tinkling trees,
All low-born thoughts and cares exiled,
To listen to the Polar breeze,
And look upon "the winter wild."

VII.

Hollo! make way along the line:—
Hark how the peasant scuds along,
His iron heels, in concord fine,
Brattling afar their under-song:
And see that urchin, ho-ieroe!
His truant legs they sink from under,
And to the quaking sheet below
Down thwacks he, with a thud like thunder!

VIII.

The skater there, with motion nice,
In semicirque and graceful wheel,
Chalks out upon the dark-blue ice
His chart of voyage with his heel;
Now skimming underneath the boughs,
Amid the crowd now gliding lone,
Where down the rink the curler throws,
With dexterous arm, his booming stone.

IX.

Behold! upon the lapsing stream
The frost-work of the night appears—
Beleaguer'd castles, round which gleam
A thousand glittering crystal spears;
Here galleys sail of shape grotesque;
There hills o'erspread with palmy trees;
And, mix'd with temples Arabesque,
Bridges and pillar'd towers Chinese.

X.

Ever doth Winter bring to me
Deep reminiscence of the past:
The opening flower and leafing tree,
The sky without a cloud o'ercast,
Themselves of beauty speak, and throw
A gleam of present joy around;
But, at each silent fall of snow,
Our hearts to boyhood's pulses bound—

XI.

To boyhood turns reflection back,
With mournful pleasure, to behold
Life's early morn, the sunny track
Of feet, now mingled with the mould:
Where are the playmates of those years?
.. Hills rise and oceans roll between:
We call—but scarcely one appears—
No more shall be what once hath been.

XII.

Yes! gazing o'er the bleak, green sea,
The snow-clad peaks and desert plain,
Mirror'd in thought, methinks to me
The spectral Past comes back again:
Once more in Retrospection's eyes,
As 'twere to second life restored,
The perish'd and the past arise,
The early lost, and long deplored!

THE DEFEAT OF WINTER.

I.

But yester morn the frozen snow
Grimly o'ermantled lawn and lea;
Grey clouds shut out the sky; the sea
Whitened in foam the cliffs below;
And storm-blasts vexed the leafless tree.

II.

And now—as by the sudden wave
Of some benign enchanter's rod—
How placidly the waters lave
The entrance of the dank sea-cave,
How brightly greens the vernal sod!

III.

Up from the dark mould, see, arise
The snowdrop with its soundless bell;
The crocus opes its azure eyes,
And, by the fountain-side, espies
A thousand daisies in the dell.

IV.

Hearken the birds—all winter long,
That through the bleak air tuneless flew;
The woodlands seem alive with song,—
They flit about, a rapturous throng,
And dart the green boughs thro' and thro'.

V.

Upon the furze the linnet sits,
And to the silence sweetly sings;
Up from the grass the sky-lark flits,
Pours forth its gushing song by fits,
And upwards soars on twinkling wings.

VI.

From crevice and from sheltered nook,
Bursting their winter sleep, the fly
And midge come forth, and gladly look
On the bright sun—some skim the brook,
Some wheel in mazy circles by.

VII.

The bee within its waxen cell
Hath felt the vernal call, and comes
Forth in the warm daylight to dwell,—
Hath bade the silent hive farewell,
And o'er the field delighted hums.

VIII.

Sky—earth—and ocean—each hath felt
The sudden influence; life renewed
Into all nature's veins hath stealt;
And Love, with an engirding belt,
Hath beautified the solitude.

IX.

As at a new, a glorious birth,
The soul exults, the heart leaps up;
A visioned joy illumines earth;
The primrose glows with silent mirth,
As does the hyacinth's blue cup.

X.

The spirit swells—the thoughts expand,
As if escaped from brooding gloom;
And in the sky, and o'er the land,
Are traced, as with an Angel's hand,
The embryo tints of coming bloom.

XI.

Awaken vanished thoughts—come back
The visions of impassioned youth;
And Hope once more regilds the track,
O'er which hath floated long the rack,
Stormy and dim, of cheerless Truth.

XII.

In boyhood, ere the spirit knew
How round the earth the seasons range,
There seemed an amaranthine hue
Upon the wall-flower, and the blue
Anemone, that owned not change;

XIII.

But Time, the moral monitor,
Brushed, one by one, bright dreams away,
Till scarce is left, but to deplore
Things that have been—to be no more:
Vainly we seek them—where are they?

XIV.

Unto the birds—unto the bloom
Of opening flowers a love was given,
As if our world knew not a tomb—
As if our yearning hearts had room
For boundless bliss, and earth was Heaven!

XV.

Away !—no dreams of gloom should dim
The spirit on a morn like this;
Fill up a beaker to the brim,
Of sunny thoughts, the beads which swim
Upon it all shall melt in bliss.

MAY-DAY.

I.

Come hither, come hither, and view the face
Of Nature, in all her May-day grace !
By the hedgerow wayside flowers are springing;
On the budded elms the birds are singing;
And up—up—up to the gates of Heaven,
Mounts the lark, on the wings of her rapture driven;
The voice of the streamlet is fresh and loud;
On the sky there is not a speck of cloud:
Come hither, come hither, and join with me
In the season's delightful jubilee !

II.

Haste out of doors: from the pastoral mount
The isles of ocean thine eye may count;
From coast to coast, and from town to town,
You can see the white sails gleaming down,
Like monstrous water-birds, which fling
The golden light from each snowy wing;
And the chimney'd steamboat tossing high
Its volumed smoke to the waste of sky;
While you note, in foam, on the yellow beach,
The tiny billows each chasing each,
Meeting, and mixing, and melting away,
Like happy things in the light of day,
As rack dissolves in the soft blue sky,
Or Time in the sea of Eternity.

III.

Why tarry at home? the swarms of air
Are about, and o'erhead, and every where—
The little fly opens its silken wings,
And from right to left like a blossom flings,
And from side to side, like a thistle-seed,
Uplifted by winds from September mead;
The midge and the moth, from their long, dull sleep,
Venture again on the light to peep,
Over land and lake abroad they fly,
Filling air with their murmurous ecstasy:
The hare leaps up from her brushwood bed,
And limps, and turns her timid head;

The partridge whirrs from the glade; the mole
Pops out from the earth of its wintry hole;
And the perking squirrel's small nose you see
From the fungous nook of its own beech-tree.

IV.

Come hasten, come hither, and you shall see
The beams of that same sun on tower and tree,
That shone over Adam in Eden's bowers,
And drank up the dew of his garden flowers;
Come hither, and look on the same blue sky,
Whose arching cloudlessness blest the eye
Of sapient Solomon, when he sung,
With fluttering heart, and raptured tongue,
"The rain is over and gone—and lo!
The winter is past, and the young flowers blow,
The turtle coos, the green figs swell,
And the tender grapes have a pleasant smell,
The birds are singing to greet the day;
Arise, my fair one, and come away!"

V.

Come hasten ye out: the reviving year
As in a glass makes the past appear;
And, afar from care, and free from strife,
We bask in the sunshine of morning life—
The days when Hope, from her seraph wing,
Rich rainbow hues over earth did fling;
And lo! the blithe throng of the green play-ground—
The cricketers cheer, and the balls rebound—

The marble is shot at the ring—the air
Re-echoes the noises of hounds and hare—
The perish'd and past, the things of yore,
Come back in the loveliest looks they wore,
And faces, long hid in Oblivion's night,
Start from the darkness, and smile in light!

VI.

Come hasten ye hither: our garden bowers
Are green with the promise of budding flowers—
The crocus, and spring's first messenger,
The fairy snowdrop, are blooming here;
The taper-leaf'd tulip is sprouting up;
The hyacinth speaks of its purple cup;
The jonquil boasteth, "Ere few weeks run,
My golden circlet I'll show the sun;"
The gillyflower raises its stem on high,
And peeps on heaven with its pinky eye;
Primroses, an iris-hued multitude,
Woo the bland airs, and in turn are woo'd;
While the wall-flower threatens, with bursting bud,
To darken its blossoms with winter's blood.

VII.

Come here, come hither, and mark how swell
The fruit-buds of the jargonelle;
On its yet but leaflet greening boughs
The apricot open its blossom throws;
The delicate peach-tree's branches run
O'er the warm wall, glad to feel the sun;

And the cherry proclaims of cloudless weather,
When its fruit and the blackbirds will toy together;
See, the gooseberry bushes their riches show;
And the currant-bloom hangs its leaves below;
And the damp-loving rasp saith, "I'll win your praise
With my grateful coolness on harvest days."
Come along, come along, and guess with me
How fair and how fruitful the year shall be!

VIII.

Look into the pasture grounds o'er the pale,
And behold the foal with its switching tail;
About and abroad in its mirth it flies,
With its long black forelocks about its eyes,
Or bends its neck down, with a stretch,
The daisy's earliest flower to reach.
See, as on by the hawthorn fence we pass,
How the sheep are nibbling the tender grass,
Or holding their heads to the sunny ray,
As if their hearts, like its smile, were gay;
While the chattering sparrows, in and out,
Fly the shrubs, and trees, and roofs about;
And sooty rooks, loudly cawing, roam
With sticks and straws to their woodland home.

IX.

Out upon in-door cares! Rejoice
In the thrill of Nature's bewitching voice!
The finger of God hath touch'd the sky,
And the clouds, like a vanquish'd army, fly,

Leaving a rich, wide, azure bow,
O'erspanning the works of His hand below :—
The finger of God hath touch'd the earth,
And it starts from slumber in smiling mirth ;
Behold it awake in the bird and bee,
In the springing flower and the sprouting tree,
And the leaping trout, and the lapsing stream,
And the south-wind soft, and the warm sunbeam :—
From the sward beneath, and the boughs above
Come the scent of flowers, and the sounds of love ;
Then haste thee hither, and join thy voice
With a world's which shouts, " Rejoice, rejoice ! "

AN EVENING SKETCH.

FROM THE LINES OF MUSSELBURGH.

THE birds have ceased their songs,
All save the blackbird, that from yon tall ash,
'Mid Pinkie's greenery, from his mellow throat,
In adoration of the setting sun,
Chants forth his evening hymn.
'Tis twilight now ;
The sovran sun behind his western hills—
His Grampian range of amethystine hue—

In glory hath declined. The volumed clouds,
Kissed by his kind effulgence, hang around,
Like pillars of some tabernacle grand,
Worthy his mighty presence; while the sky,
Illumined to its centre, glows intense,
Changing the sapphire of its arch to gold.
How deep is the tranquillity! yon wood
Is slumbering through its multitude of stems,
Even to the leaflet on the frailest twig!
A gentle gloom pervades the Birslie heights,
An azure softness mingling with the sky;
And westward, looking to the Morphoots dim,
Grey Falsyde, like an aged sentinel,
Stands on the shoulder of his watch-tower green.
Nor lovely less in its serenity
The Forth, now waveless as a lake engulfed
'Mid sheltering hills; without a ripple spreads
Its bosom, silent and immense: the hues
Of flickering light have from its surface died,
Leaving it garbed in sunless majesty.
No more is heard the plover's circling wail,
No more the silver of the sea-mew's wing
In casual dip beheld; on eastern Bass
The flocks of ocean slumber in their cells.
The fisherman, forsaken by the tide,
His shadow lost, drags to the yellow shore
His cumbrous nets, and in the sheltering cove
Behind yon rocky point his shallop moors,
To tempt again the perilous deep at dawn.
With bosoming boughs round Musselburgh hang

Its clumps of ancient elm-trees ; silently
Pierces the sky its immemorial spire,
Whose curfew-bell, through many a century,
Glad sound, hath loosed the artisan from toil ;
And silently, o'er many a chimneyed roof,
The smoke from many a cheerful hearth ascends,
Melting in ether.
As I gaze, behold
The Evening Star illumines the blue south,
Twinkling in loveliness. O holy star !
Thou bright dispenser of the welcome dews,
Thou herald of Night's glowing galaxy,
And harbinger of social bliss ! how oft,
Amid the twilights of departed years,
Ere Truth had from the pinions of Romance
Brushed off the downy gold—how oft, alone,
Resting beside the grove-o'ershadowed Esk,
On trunk of mossy oak, with eyes upturned
To thee in admiration, have I sate,
Dreaming sweet dreams, till earth-born turbulence
Was quite forgot, and fancying that in thee,
So glitteringly remote, so calm, so pure,
Free from the sins and sorrows of this world,
There might be realms of real happiness !

ON THE DEATH OF IDA.

I.

'Tis midnight deep; the full, round moon,
As 'twere a spectre, walks the sky;
The balmy breath of gentlest June
Just stirs the stream that murmurs by:
Above me frowns the solemn wood;
Nature, methinks, seems Solitude
Embodied to the eye.

II.

Yes, 'tis a season and a scene,
Ida, to think on thee: the day,
With stir and strife, may come between
Affection and thy beauty's ray;
But feeling here assumes control,
And mourns my desolated soul
That thou art rapt away!

III.

Thou wert a rainbow to my sight,
The storms of life before thee fled;
The glory and the guiding light
That onward cheered and upward led;
From boyhood to this very hour,
For me, and only me, thy flower
Its fragrance seemed to shed.

IV.

Dark though the world for me might show
Its sordid faith and selfish gloom,
Yet, 'mid life's wilderness, to know
For me that sweet flower shed its bloom,
Was joy, was solace—thou art gone—
And hope forsook me, when the stone
Sank darkly o'er thy tomb.

V.

And art thou dead? I dare not think
That thus the solemn truth can be;
And broken is the only link
That chain'd youth's pleasant thoughts to me!
Alas! that thou couldst know decay—
That, sighing, I should live to say,
"The cold grave holdeth thee!"

VI.

For me thou shon'st, as shines a star,
  Lonely, in clouds when heaven is lost;
Thou wert my guiding light afar,
  When on misfortune's billows tost:
Now darkness hath obscured that light,
And I am left, in rayless night,
  On Sorrow's lowering coast.

VII.

And art thou gone? I deemed thee some
  Immortal essence—art thou gone?
I saw thee laid within the tomb,
  And I am left to mourn alone:
Once to have loved is to have loved
Enough; and what with thee I proved,
  Again I'll seek in none.

VIII.

Earth in thy sight grew faëry land;
  Life was Elysium—thought was love—
When, long ago, hand clasped in hand,
  We roamed through Autumn's twilight grove;
Or watched the broad uprising moon
Shed, as it were, a wizard noon,
  The blasted heath above.

IX.

Farewell !—and must I say farewell ?—
No—thou wilt ever be to me
A present thought ; thy form shall dwell
In love's most holy sanctuary ;
Thy voice shall mingle with my dreams,
And haunt me when the shot-star gleams
Above the rippling sea.

X.

Never revives the past again ;
But still thou art, in lonely hours,
To me earth's heaven, the azure main,
Soft music, and the breath of flowers ;
My heart shall gain from thee its hues ;
And Memory give, though truth refuse,
The bliss that once was ours !

OUR NATIVE LAND.

Moriens dulces reminiscitur Argos.

THE halo round the Seraph's head,
Too purified for thing of earth,
Is not more beautifully bright
Than that celestial zone of light,
Which Nature's magic hand hath shed
Around the land which gave us birth.

O !—be that country beautified
With woods that wave, and streams that glide,
Where bounteous air and earth unfold
The gales of health and crops of gold ;
Let flowers and fields be ever fair ;
Let fragrance load the languid air ;
Be vines in every valley there,
And olives on each mountain side :—
Or—let it be a wilderness
Where heaven and earth oppose in gloom ;

Where the low sun all faintly glows
O'er regions of perennial snows :—
Still 'tis the country not the less
Of him, who sows what ne'er may bless
His labours with autumnal bloom !

Yés ! partial clans, in every clime,
Since first commenced the march of Time,
Where'er they rest—where'er they roam—
All unforgot,
Have still a spot
Which memory loves, and heart calls—home !
From where Antarctic oceans roar
Round Patagonia's mountain shore ;
To where grim Hecla's cone aspires,
With sides of snow, and throat of fires !

BLOOM AND BLIGHT.

I.

THE scene is desolate and bleak;
Dim clouds, presaging tempest, streak
The waning fields of air;
In sombre shade the valleys lie,
And January breezes sigh
Through leafless forests bare;
The rank grass rustles by the stone,
With danky lichens overgrown.

II.

The drooping cattle cower below,
While on the beech's topmost bough
The croaking raven sits;
The tumult of the torrent's roar,
That, rain-swoln, rushes to the shore,
Is heard and lost by fits—
Now with a voice o'erpowering all,
Now sinking in a dying fall.

III.

How vanishes our time away!
'Tis like the circuit of a day,
Since last, with devious feet,
This lone, sequester'd path I trode;
The blooming wild-flowers gemm'd the sod,
And made the breezes sweet;
The hues of earth, the tints of sky,
Were rapture to the heart and eye.

IV.

I listen'd to the linnet's song;
I heard the lyric lark prolong
Her heart-exulting note,
When, far removed from mortal sight,
She, soaring to the source of light,
Her way through cloudland sought,
And, from ethereal depths above,
Seem'd hymning earth with strains of love.

V.

The wild rose, arch'd in artless bower,
The purpling thyme, the heather flower,
The whin in golden bloom,
Smiled forth upon the shining day,
As if they joy'd in their array
Of beauty and perfume;
And from the heart of every grove
Was heard the cushat's coo of love.

VI.

And now I listen to the breeze
That whistles through the leafless trees,
And to the pattering rain;
Down roars the stream with foamy surge,
And from the marsh the curlew's dirge
Comes wailing o'er the plain:
Well may such alter'd scene impart
A moral to the thinking heart!

VII.

In youth, ah! little do we think
How near the torrent's crumbling brink
The flowers of pleasure grow;
How fickle Fortune's gale; how far
From gleam of Duty's guiding star,
Life's bark may sail below;
What chance and change frail Man may brave,
Betwixt the cradle and the grave!

VIII.

Change is impress'd on all we see—
The budding, blooming, blighted tree;
The brightening waning sky;
The sun that rises but to set;
Health with its glowing coronet;
Disease with sunken eye;
And Childhood passing, stage by stage,
Through Manhood to decrepit Age.

IX.

What read we thence? That not for us
In vain Creation preacheth thus,
By growth and by decay:
That Man should lift his mental eye
Beyond Earth's frail mortality,
And in the endless day
Of Heaven behold a light display'd,
To which Our sunshine is like shade.

MINE OWN.

I.

I NEED not token-flowers to tell
How deeply dear thou art,
Still on mine ear thine accents dwell,
Thy virtues in my heart;
Thy beauty floats before mine eyes
In soft celestial light,
Alike at orient day's uprise,
And pensive-shut of night

II.

Although afar—although afar—
Yet art thou with me still,
When evening's star, and morning's star,
Gleams o'er the twilight hill ;
Thy beauty streams through all my dreams,
The lone night-watches through ;
And cloudless skies recall thine eyes,
The archangel's tearless blue.

III.

The sinking and the swelling heart
Of fond yet fearful love,
The bliss to meet, the pain to part,
It hath been ours to prove ;
The deep embrace of blessedness,
By absence made more blest ;
And separation's pangs, which press
Its life-blood from the breast.

IV.

Memorials of that vanished day
Of mingled bliss and woe,
When from yon garden bowers away
Time forced my steps to go ;
I prize each withered bloom and stalk,
For that dear hand of thine,
Which plucked them on our parting walk,
And gifted them to mine.

V.

I see thee in thy beauty yet
Upon the gravel stand,
The glowing tints, red, blue, and jet,
Fresh blooming in thy hand:
And lo! all withered, wan, and dried,
Before me here they lie,
To tell that since I left thy side
Long months have lingered by.

VI.

But think not months, however long,
(For long all months must be,
Theme of my blessing and my song!
Which sever me from thee,)
Shall e'er undo one tender tie
Affection's fingers wove,
Shall make less deep the daily sigh
Which Absence owes to Love!

VII.

'Twas Autumn,—and the redbreast lulled
With song the fading bowers,
When for my hand thy fingers culled
These wan and withered flowers:
Fresh were they then; but, as I gaze
The shrivelled blossoms o'er,
The mountain-peaks are grey with haze,
And gleams the snowy moor.

VIII.

The clouds of doubt between us rolled,
In shadows passed the day,
But, like a star, thy love consoled
My spirit with its ray;
For through the tempest and the night
That beam was duly shed,
To cherish with its steadfast light
The hope which else had fled.

IX.

O hallowed, Heavenly to my view
Is every gentle scene,
Where thy fair foot hath brushed the dew
From off the daisied green!
Thy love, thy loveliness, thy worth,
To me seem blessings given,
To show my soul how things of earth
Can raise its thoughts to Heaven!

X.

Farewell! thou shalt not be forgot,
My beautiful, MINE OWN!
O may the sorrows of our lot
Bow down my head alone!
And these dried flowers, which, given to me,
Were moist with morning rain,
Shall bloom of thee, and breathe of thee,
Until we meet again!

THE IMPROVISATRICE.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF A PICTURE BY BONE, ENGRAVED BY ROMNEY.

I.

Beside her cottage door she sate and sang,
That gentle creature, with her deep black eyes,
As if her heart of grief ne'er owned a pang,
And her young breast were sunny as her skies;
The ripe rich grapes hung clustering round her head,
And roses, by her side, sweet perfume shed.

II.

A poetess in spirit, by the touch—
Of Nature framed, she needed not the rules
Of pedants, sophists, dogmatists, and such;
Art's trickery, or the doctrines of the schools:
The glow was at her soul, and so she sung,
Life in her words, and heart upon her tongue.

III.

Her theme was love—of quiet summer eves,
And shepherds piping in the pastoral dale;
And how, with throbbing heart, beneath the leaves
Of the green elms, the lover breathed his tale,
And she, his idol, from his amorous arms,
Half-pain'd, half-pleas'd, withdrew her conquering charms.

IV.

Of Tasso and his passion deep she told,
His inspiration, frenzy, and despair;
And how, thro' lonesome years, amid the mould
Of dungeon cells, his Leonora fair
Rose in her beauty on his tranced sight,
Like eve's one star 'mid winter's gathering night.

V.

And then to gentle Petrarch changed the theme,
And to Vaucluse's woodland greenery bright—
Laura his daylight idol, and the dream
Of his mild spirit through each watch of night;
Time purifying still his ardours high,
Till Passion's self became Philosophy.

VI.

Anon she sang of battle, and the breath
Of Slaughter tainting heaven's salubrious gale;
Households laid prostrate by the leveller Death,
And orphans desolate, and widows pale;
Anguish imploring Rapine, deaf to hear;
Life-withering Famine, and sepulchral Fear.

VII.

The wars of fierce and fiery Tamerlane
She sang; and how it soothed his savage rage
To pluck, in daily hate, the humbling chain
Which knit proud Bajazet to his iron cage,
Until, beneath Scorn's unrelenting yoke,
His hopes forsook him, and his heart was broke.

VIII.

Then Peter's praise she hymn'd, who o'er the rude
And darken'd Russ shed civilising light,
Triumphant in the van of battle stood,
And vanquish'd Charles at red Pultowa's fight.—
Symphonious with her voice, the rich guitar
Calm'd into peace, or kindled into war.

IX.

Anon the varied charms of Nature's face
Would lend a syren witchery to her song,
As she the lovely lineaments would trace
Of amaranthine isles, to which belong
Perennial, endless summer; and man's life,
Unpoison'd by Ambition, knows not strife.

X.

Straight to the wintry waste of polar seas
Th' enchantress bore with her the soul astray,
Where scowl'd the iceberg, and the sleety breeze
Drifted from howling cubs the bear away,
And fur-clad natives, housed in caverns drear,
Slept thro' the night which darken'd half the year.

XI.

The Passions at her bidding throng'd around—
Hope, with her bright blue eyes and golden hair;
Teeth-gnashing Hate; Remorse that bit the ground;
Yellow-brow'd Jealousy, and fierce Despair;—
The Spirits met and mix'd; and from the strife
She drew that pictured chaos, human life.

XII.

Gaze on that face—'tis fair and feminine;
Yet, in the mirror of those pensive eyes,
Whose lustre rather seems to speak than shine,
A fathomless abyss of passion lies:
Earth is to her a spectral vision bright,
Flashing with sunshine, or begrimed with night.

XIII.

'Tis past!—and art thou but a brilliant dream
On which I gaze—a something, by the power
Of Genius conjured from the shapes that teem
In the mind's eye, thro' Inspiration's hour?—
Even as I gaze, the warm illusions fade
Into a silent scene, an empty shade.

XIV.

Bare canvass, and the solitary gloom
Of a dim studio—there the Painter stands,
Bidding each nice and tender touch illume
The scene, till beauty on the sight expands;
And lo! the marvel which creative Art
Gifts in its high perfection to the heart!

XV.

Yes! such was the illusion, and so bright
The Poetess of Nature, which the power
Of genius conjured to the Painter's sight,
In Contemplation's meditative hour,—
The syren shape in Memory's love enshrined,
Which Bone to beauty drew, and Romney lined.

CHRISTMAS MUSINGS.

ADDRESSED TO IANTHE.

I.

TIME flies apace—another year hath perished,
Perished, and joined the irrevocable past;
Hopes, in its progress brightly born and cherished,
Have been by shade o'ercast,
And sorrows, that seemed evils to our sight,
Have "turned their silver linings to the night:"
So little do we know of what is for us
Doomed by unerring Providence for good,
That, could the past from out its womb restore us
The visions we have wooed,
So inconsistent must existence seem,
That reason should seem frenzy, truth a dream.

II.

Time flies apace—since last ice-crown'd December
With his snow-mantle overlaid the earth,
What myriad hopes and fears do we remember,
That had their death or birth!
How many joys and sorrows, which have made
Life's pathway one all sunshine, or all shade!
Since last the ruddy Christmas hearth did brighten
The kindred faces of the social ring,
Since last the angel of the frost did whiten
The landscape with his wing,
Hath Misery from our firesides kept aloof?
Hath Death afforded of his power no proof?

III.

Ah! who can say thus much? and tho' hath cost me
Full many a heart-pang the departed year,
Yet why should I repine?—it hath not lost me
(What was of all most dear)
Thy love—an undeserved possession, worth
Far more than all the wealth of all the earth!
Yes, in that knowledge there are blessings treasured,
More than a kingdom's gold for me could buy:
Oft are life's goods by a false standard measured
In Error's vulgar eye,
While happiness, true happiness, is found
In the heart's feelings, not in things around.

IV.

Summer was on the hills, when last we parted,
Flowers in the vale, and beauty in the sky;
Our hearts were true, altho' our hopes were thwarted:
Forward, with wistful eye,
Scarce half-resigned we looked, yet thought how sweet
'Twould be again in after-months to meet.
Now 'tis December chill: the moon is shining
O'er the grey mountains and the stilly sea,
As, by the streamlet's willowy bend reclining,
I pause, remembering thee,
Who to the moonlight lent a softer charm,
As through these wilds we wandered, arm in arm.

V.

Yes! as we roamed, the sylvan earth seemed glowing
With many a beauty unremarked before:
The soul was like a deep urn overflowing
With thoughts, a treasured store;
The very flowers seemed born but to exhale,
As breathed the West, their fragrance to the gale.
Methinks I see thee yet—thy form of lightness,
An angel phantom gliding through the trees,
Thine alabaster brow, thy cheek of brightness,
Thy tresses in the breeze
Floating their auburn, and thine eyes that made,
So rich their blue, heaven's azure like a shade.

VI.

Methinks even yet I feel thy timid fingers,
With their bland pressure, thrilling bliss to mine:
Methinks yet on my cheek thy breathing lingers,
As, fondly leant to thine,
I told how life all pleasureless would be,
Green palm-tree of earth's desert, wanting thee.—
Not yet, not yet, had Disappointment shrouded
Youth's summer calm with storms of wintry strife;
The star of Hope shone o'er our path unclouded;
And Fancy coloured life
With those elysian rainbow hues, which Truth
Melts with his rod, when disenchanting Youth.

VII.

Where art thou now? I look around, but see not
The features and the form that haunt my dreams:
Where art thou now? I listen, but for me not
The deep, rich music streams
Of that entrancing voice, which could bestow
A zest to pleasure and a balm to woe:
I miss thy smile, when morn's first light is bursting
Through the green branches of the casement tree;
To list thy voice my lonely ear is thirsting,
Beside the moonlight sea.
Vain are my longings, my repinings vain;
Sleep only gives thee to my arms again.

VIII.

Yet should it cheer me, that nor Woe hath shattered
The ties that link our hearts, nor Hate, nor Wrath;
And soon the day may dawn, when shall be scattered
All shadows from our path;
And visions be fulfilled, by Hope adored,
In thee, the long-lost, to mine arms restored.
Ah, could I see thee!—see thee, were it only
But for a moment looking bliss to me!
Ah, could I hear thee!—desolate and lonely
Is life, deprived of thee:
I start from out my reverie, to know
That hills between us rise, and rivers flow.

IX.

Let fickle Fortune change—be she preparing
To shower her arrows, or to shed her balm,
All that I ask for, pray for, is the sharing
With thee life's storm or calm;
For ah! with others, Wealth and Mirth would be
Less sweet by far than Sorrow shared with thee!
Yes! vainly, foolishly, the vulgar reckon,
That Happiness resides in outward shows:
Contentment from the lowliest cot may beckon
True Love to sweet repose;
For genuine bliss can ne'er be far apart,
When soul meets soul, and heart responds to heart.

X.

Farewell! let tyrannous Time roll on, estranging
The eyes and heart from each familiar spot,
Be fickle friendships with the seasons changing,
So that thou changest not!
I would not that the love, which owes its birth
To Heaven, should perish like the things of earth!—
Adieu! as falls the flooding moonlight round me,
Fall Heaven's best joys on thy beloved head;
May cares that harass, and may griefs that wound me,
Flee from thy path and bed!
Be every thought that stirs, and hour that flies,
Sweet as thy smile, and radiant as thine eyes!

LINES

ON

A PORTRAIT OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, BY C. R. LESLIE, ESQ., R.A.

Pride of my country! I delight,
As from the Painter's canvass bright
Thy placid smile beams cheerily,
Musing alone, to gaze on thee,
Imagination's mightiest son,
And, marvelling at thy triumphs won,

Think what may be achieved by man,
Even in this life's contracted span!

Ennobler of man's name! thy mind
Is as the free air unconfined;
Thou wav'st thy wand—and from the tomb
Long-vanished spirits trooping come;
Tradition's shadowy ages pass
Before our thoughts, as in a glass;
The past is as the present seen;
And hoar Antiquity looks green.
There glide they on—revived once more,
The feelings and the forms of yore—
The cuirassed warrior, stern and high;
Beauty, with soul-subduing eye;
Religion's choir in cloistral nave;
The hermit in his mossy cave;
The warder on the bastion's brow;
The peasant at his peaceful plough;
The simple serf, the lettered sage,
Soul-glowing youth, and chastened age;
The loftiest and the lowliest birth;
The pomp and poverty of earth!

Prime lustre of our age! with glow
Of grateful pride, I thrill to know
That I am countryman of thine:
Thy fame to Scotland is a mine
Of glory, wealthier than Peru
Can boast her golden regions through.

Thy tale is on our hills—thy tale
Re-echoes through each verdant vale;
From southland borders, where the Tweed
Flows murmuring to the shepherd's reed,
And, by the cairn and crested steep,
Ruin and Silence empire keep;
To where the Arctic billow foams
Round Shetland's sad and silent homes,
And weeps the rain, and wails the surge,
As 'twere of living things the dirge.

Kind benefactor of thy race,
The whole world seems thy dwelling-place!
Where'er flows blood of human-kind,
Man will in thee a brother find.
Thou hast not used thy genius high
Life's motley scenes to bid us fly;
Thou hast not told us that our fate
Is to be hated, and to hate;
That faith is falsehood; that within
Man's heart dwells nought save thoughts of sin;
That eyes were only formed to weep;
That death is an eternal sleep:
No!—thou hast taught us that the air
Is sweet, the green earth very fair;
That on the mount and on the main,
That in the forest and the plain,
Nature's boon gifts are richly strewn;
That peace dwells with the good alone;

That man's heart is a holy place,
And man of an immortal race!

Thy soul-born greatness can deride,
Illustrious Bard! all paltry pride,
And 'midst thy fellows thou might'st pass
As not apart, but of the mass;
Yet who hath won a fame like thee,
Throughout the world, by land or sea?
With it Time's empire is allied,
And the world rings from side to side:
'Tis fame, the loftiest and the best
That ever mortal genius blest:
'Tis pure—that fame owes not a jot
From pandering to unworthy thought:
It ne'er awakened virtue's sigh,
Nor flushed the cheek of modesty:
'Tis bloodless—from another's woe
Thy laurels were not trained to grow;
And thou canst lay thee down at eve,
Nor with the boast thy heart deceive,
That thou has done thy best to throw
Hope's healing balm o'er human woe;
In south and north, in east and west,
That thou hast made some bosom blest;
Lighted the cheerless home of grief;
To wearied spirits breathed relief;
Stirred youth's ambitious pulse to rise;
And drawn sweet tears from Beauty's eyes.

Brother of Homer, and of him,
By Avon's shore, 'mid twilight dim,
Who dreamed immortal dreams, and took
From Nature's hand her pictured book,
Time hath not seen, and may not see,
Till ends his reign, a third like thee.

THE GRAVES OF THE DEAD.

A DIRGE.

A pickaxe, and a spade, a spade,
But and a shrouding sheet;
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet!
LORD DE VAUX

I.

Oh, when should we visit the graves of the dead,
To hallow the memory of days that are fled?

At Morning,—when the dewdrops glisten
On the bladed grass and the whispering leaves,
When the heart-struck silence delights to listen
As the solitary blackbird grieves;

Then the glorious orient sun, adorning
The landscape, asks us, where are they,
Who, like larks, with us in life's sweet morning,
Carelessly sung all blithe and gay?
We listen in vain for their gentle voices,
We look in vain for their pleasant smiles;
Yet Nature still in her youth rejoices,
And almost the bosom to joy beguiles.
We find them not within the wildwood,
Up in the mountain, down in the plain,
As erst of yore, when the skies of childhood
Gleam'd bluely o'er us without a stain.

Alas! and alas!
Green grows the grass—
Like the waves we come, like the winds we pass!

II.

Oh, when should we visit the graves of the dead,
To hallow the memory of days that are fled?

At Noontide,—when the wide world round us
Busily hums with tumultuous strife,
And Fate with her viewless chain hath bound us
Within the enchanted ring of life;
'Tis then that the startled soul, recoiling,
Turns, sickening turns, from the noisy crowd,
And feels how empty is all our toiling,
When the certain finish is in the shroud.

Lone, lone—by the living all forsaken—
Bud the wild-flowers, and bloom around;
The fierce-eyed sunbeams no more awaken
From that dreamless slumber, sad and sound;
Then in the green fields flocks are bleating,
And neighs the proud steed beneath his palm,
To whose covert boughs the birds retreating,
In coolness chant their choral psalm.

But alas! and alas!
Green grows the grass—
Like the waves we come, like the winds we pass!

III.

Oh, when should we visit the graves of the dead,
To hallow the memory of days that are fled?

At Evening,—when the flowery meadows
With the haze of twilight begin to fill,
And darkly afar the eastward shadows
Stretch from the peaks of the sunless hill;
When the laggard oxen from fields of clover
Low mournfully as on they roam;
And, with sooty wing, sails slowly over
The night-o'ertaken crow to its home:
Oh, then the forms of the dear departed
Float, spectre-like, in Fancy's eye—
They come—the pale—the broken-hearted—
They come—the mirthful—flitting by;

We scan their features, we list their voices,
The sights, the sounds of remembered years—
This in its buoyant tone rejoices,
That softly thrills on the brink of tears.

Oh, alas! and alas!
Green grows the grass—
Like the waves we come, like the winds we pass!

IV.

Oh, when should we visit the graves of the dead,
To hallow the memory of days that are fled?

At Midnight,—when the skies are clouded,
The stars seal'd up, and the winds abroad;
When earth in a dreary pall is shrouded,
And sere leaves strew the uncertain road;
When desolate tones are around us moaning,
O'er gravestone grey, and through ruined aisle;
When startled ravens croak, and the groaning
Tempest uptosses forests the while—
Then let us pause by ourselves, and listen
To nature's dirge over human life;
And the heart will throb, the eye will glisten,
When Memory glances to prospects rife
With pleasures, which Time's rude whirlwind banish'd,
With meteor visions that flamed and fled,
With friends that smiled, and smiling vanish'd
To make their lone homes with the dead.

For alas! and alas!
Green grows the grass—
Like the waves we come, like the winds we pass.

v.

Oh, when should we visit the graves of the dead,
To hallow the memory of days that are fled?

In Grief,—for then reflection gleaneth
A lesson deep from unstable fate;
And Wisdom's small voice the spirit weaneth
From earth's forlorn and low estate:—
In Mirth,—because 'tis mockery surely
Of what we feel, and perceive around;
And the chasten'd bosom beats more purely,
When press our footsteps on hallowed ground:—
At all times,—for 'tis wisely loosing
The soul from ties that bind it down;
And a godlike strength is gained from musing
On the fate which soon must prove our own:
For here Sorrow's reign is short, if bitter;
And Pleasure's sunshine, though bright, is brief;
And pass our days o'er in gloom or glitter,
Death comes at length, like a silent thief!

Then alas, and alas!
Like the dews from grass—
Like the clouds from heaven, away we pass!

THE BARD'S WISH.

I.

O! WERE I laid
In the greenwood shade,
Beneath the covert of waving trees;
Removed from woe,
And the ills below,
That render life but a long disease!

II.

No more to weep,
But in soothing sleep
To slumber on long ages through;
My grave-turf bright
With the rosy light
Of eve, or the morning's silver dew!

III.

For all my dreams,
And vision'd gleams,
Are not like those of this earthly span;

My spirit would stray
For ever away
From the noise of strife, and the haunts of man.

IV.

I ask no dirge—
The foaming surge
Of the torrent will sing a lament for me;
And the evening breeze,
That stirs the trees,
Will murmur a mournful lullaby.

V.

Plant not—plant not—
Above the spot,
Memorial stones for the stranger's gaze;
The earth and sky
Are enough, for I
Have lived with Nature all my days!

VI.

O! were I laid
In the greenwood shade,
Beneath the covert of waving trees;
Removed from woe,
And the ills below,
That render life but a long disease!

THE LAMENT OF SELIM.

I.

THE waters of the Bosphorus
Have lost their crimson glow as darkles
Day's occidental fire, and thus,
In tearful beauty tremulous,
The radiant Star of Evening sparkles
In the blue south, where Stamboul lies—
Its myriad minarets and spires,
Forsaken by red sunset's fires,
In darkness grouped against the skies:
Around my path the cypress trees
Are stirring in the landward breeze;
The flowers outbreathe beneath my feet,
Rejoicing that the sunny heat
Hath passed, and that the cooling dews
Are on their journey from the height
Of cloudless zenith, to infuse
Freshness, and fragrance, and delight,

O'er all the parched and panting things
On which they fall like angels' wings.
Far off the Muezzin's voice is heard,
The watcher's call to evening prayer;
And overhead that holy bird,
The Bulbul, charms the silent air
With notes alone to sorrow given,
Though breathed on earth that speak of Heaven,
And of the blessed bowers above,
For still their theme is love—is love!
If aught below can soothe the soul
Of him whose days ungladden'd roll
On, month by month, and year by year,
With naught to wish for, naught to fear,
It is an hour like this, so calm
Along the fragrant fields of balm
Luxurious Zephyr roams, and brings
Delicious freshness on his wings.

II.

But Thou art gone!—at twilight's gloom
I come to rest beside thy tomb,
O Azza! thou of all the daughters
Of womankind, who wert most dear;
Thy voice than Zem-zem's murmurous waters
Was more delicious to mine ear;
Vainly the summer blossom seeks,
Beloved, to emulate thy cheek's
Soft natural peach-bloom; and thy brow
Outshone in whiteness the pure snow

(As sings the Scald in Runic rhymes)
On the hill-tops of northern climes;
Thy tresses were like black ripe berries
Down-clustering from the elder-tree;
Thy parting lips like cloven cherries,
That near each other lovingly;
And O, thine eyes! thy melting eyes,
More bright than Houri's glance of Heaven,
A diamond dowry from the skies
To thee alone of mortals given,
In their own depths of light did swim,
Making the wild gazelle's look dim.

III.

Still glooms the night, still shines the day,
Beneath the moon's soft, silver ray,—
Beneath the sun's triumphant light,
That seems to make all nature bright;
And thou art not!—in solitude
The thoughts of other years awake,
No marvel that my heart should ache,
When on thy vanished charms I brood.
Oh, Azza! what is life to him
Whose star is quenched, whose day is dim—
Dim as the visioned hours of night,
When sorrows frown and cares affright!
And Thou art not!—I look around,
But thou art nowhere to be found!
I listen vainly for thy foot—
I listen, but thy voice is mute!

I hear the night-winds sighing drear,
And all is misery, gloom, and fear!
This City of the Silent far
  Transcends for me the haunts of men;
  I'd rather house me in the den
Of hungry wolves than bide their jar:
There all is weariness, or strife
That makes an agony of life;
Serenely here the eye reposes
On sculptured turban-stones and roses.

IV.

Dark is the night of ruin, dark
  As chaos ere the glorious sun
Awoke, or Eve her pearly bark
  Launched forth, or stars like omens shone
Of blessedness beyond the grave
For all the faithful and the brave.
Whither would roam my visions, where
Find images of man's despair?
A vessel on a sunless sea
Tossing through mists eternally,
Without an anchor 'mid the waste
Of waves, where shore is never traced,
For ever beating round and round,
Through endless years, the dim profound;
Or like that bird, without the power,
'Mid winds that rush, and clouds that lower,
To light on earth—a bird of Thrace,
That knows no human dwelling-place.

v.

They say that woman, like a flower,
Expands her beauties to the day,
Blooms through the lapse of Time's brief hour,
Then withers on the stalk away :
They say her span is short and narrow,
Though gemmed with flowers her earthly path,
And that the barb of Azrael's arrow
To her brings everlasting death—
A thing that Beauty's breath invents
Of perishable elements.
But man has higher hopes, they say,
That powers of darkness cannot bind him,
That, bursting from the tomb away,
He leaves the realms of change behind him ;
That o'er Alsirat's arch he flies,
Until the shores of Paradise
Are gained, and Houris with a kiss
Give welcome to the bowers of bliss—
Of bliss that ends not—joy whose touch
To rapturous ecstasies elate him :
So joy-fraught is his doom, and such
The sun-bright fortunes that await him.
And can it be that Woman dies,
Like Gul in all her July glory,
Courting our love to mock our eyes
For aye—the moral of a story ?
And can it be that she, who stole
My heart away, who was my trust,
My hope, of every wish the goal,

Could be a thing without a soul,
Whose elements were merely dust—
Dust, which shall sleep for evermore
Within the silent tomb's domain,
Which He who framed shall ne'er restore
To beauty, love, and life again?
If so, where lies my comfort, where?
I bow in silence to despair!

VI.

I ask not Heaven; there could not be,
Azza beloved! at least for me,
A paradise that holds not thee.
Ah, no! my first, last, only love!
Nor in the amaranthine bowers,
Nor in the crystal shrines above,
The heart-felt bliss that once was ours
Could e'er my spirit hope to find;
Nor in the maids, whose glances dart,
Ever angelically kind,
New thrills of rapture through the heart:
To thee alone my thoughts would turn,
Fraught with undying love, and burn!

VII.

I lean my forehead on thy stone;
And art Thou not? I dwell alone
In sorrow's cloud, since Thou art gone!
Howe'er I turn—where'er I flee—
Earth is a wilderness to me:

I pause to hear thy step in vain,
Thy timid step of fairy lightness;
Ah! ne'er shall break on me again,
Like lightning-flash, thy glance of brightness,
Thrilling my heart-strings with the glow
Of love, in all its lava flow.

VIII.

From men, and from the ways of men,
When twilight's dewy shades descend,
Hither my willing footsteps tend
In solitary guise; and then,
While resting by thy tomb, I find
Solace, in pouring forth my mind
Unto the silence; for I ween
Thou still must be, although unseen,
Circling my path, until I flee
To dwell for evermore with thee,
In realms where anguish is forgot,
And hateful Azrael enters not,
But where a future ever bright
Shall smile, and naught have power to sever;
And where my soul, made blest for ever,
Shall sun itself in Azza's light.

THE DARK WAGGON.

I.

THE Water-Wraith shrieked over Clyde,
The winds through high Dumbarton sighed,
When to the trumpet's call replied
The deep drum from the square;
And in the midnight's misty shade,
With helm, and cloak, and glancing blade,
Two hundred horsemen stood arrayed
Beneath the torch's glare.

II.

Around a huge sepulchral van
They took their station, horse and man.
The outer gateway's bolts withdrawn,
In haste the drawbridge fell;
And out, with iron clatter, went
That sullen midnight armament,
Alone the leader knew where bent,
With what—he might not tell.

III.

Into the darkness they are gone:
The blinded waggon thundered on,
And, save of hoof-tramp, sound was none:
Hurriedly on they scour
The eastward track—away—away—
To none they speak, brook no delay,
Till farm-cocks heralded the day,
And hour had followed hour.

IV.

Behind them, mingling with the skies,
Westward the smoke of Glasgow dies—
The pastoral hills of Campsie rise
Northward in morning's air—
By Kirkintilloc, Cumbernold,
And Castlecary, on they hold,
Till Lythgo shows, in mirrored gold,
Its palaced loch so fair.[6]

V.

Brief baiting-time:—the bugle sounds,
Onwards the ponderous van rebounds
'Mid the grim squadron, which surrounds
Its path with spur and spear.
Thy shrine, Dumanie, fades on sight,[7]
And, seen from Niddreff's hazelly height,
The Forth, amid its islands bright,
Shimmers with lustre clear.[8]

VI.

The Maiden Castle next surveyed,
Across the furzy hills of Braid,
By Craig-Milor,[9] through Wymet's glade
To Inneresc they wound;[10]
Then o'er the Garlton crags afar,
Where, oft a check to England's war,
Cospatrick's stronghold of Dunbar
In proud defiance frowned.[11]

VII.

Weep through each grove, ye tearful rills!
Ye ivied caves, which Echo fills
With voice, lament! Ye proud, free hills,
Where eagles wheel and soar,
Bid noontide o'er your summits throw
Storm's murkiest cloud! Ye vales below,
Let all your wild-flowers cease to blow,
And with bent heads deplore!

VIII.

Ye passions, that, with holy fire,
Illume man's bosom—that inspire
To daring deed, or proud desire,
With indignation burn!
Ye household charities, that keep
Watch over childhood's rosy sleep,
With ashes strew the hearthstone,—weep
As o'er a funeral urn!

IX.

On—on they speed. Oh dreary day,
That, like a vampire, drained away
The blood from Scotland's heart! Delay,
Thou lingering sun, to set!
Rain, twilight! rain down bloody dews
O'er all the eye far northward views;
Nor do thou, night of nights! refuse
A darkness black as jet.

X.

Heroic spirits of the dead!
That in the body nobly bled,
By whom the battle-field for bed
Was chosen, look ye down,—
And see if hearts are all grown cold,—
If for their just rights none are bold,—
If servile earth one bosom hold,
Worthy of old renown?

XI.

The pass-word given, o'er bridge of Tweed
The cavalcade, with slackened speed,
Rolled on, like one from nightmare freed,
That draws an easier breath;
But o'er and round it hung the gloom
As of some dark, mysterious doom—
Shadows cast forward from the tomb,
And auguries of death.

XII.

Scotland receded from the view,
And, on the far horizon blue,
Faded her last, dear hills—the mew
Screamed to its sea-isle near.
As day-beams ceased the west to flout,
Each after each the stars came out,
Like camp-fires heaven's high hosts about,
With lustre calm and clear.

XIII.

And on, through many a Saxon town
Northumbrian, and of quaint renown,
Before the morning star went down,
With thunderous reel they hied ;
While from the lattices aloof,
Of many an angled, grey-stone roof,
Rose sudden heads, as sound of hoof
And wheel to southward died.

XIV.

Like Hope's voice preaching to Despair,
Sweetly the chimes for matin prayer
Melted upon the dewy air
From Hexham's holy pile ;
But, like the adder deaf, no sound,
Or stern or sweet, an echo found
'Mid that dark squadron, as it wound
Still onward, mile on mile.

XV.

Streamers, and booths, and country games,
And brawny churls, with rustic names,
And blooming maids, and buxom dames—
A boisterous village fair!
On stage his sleights the jongleur shows,
Like strutting cock the jester crows,
And high the morrice-dancer throws
His antic heels in air.

XVI.

Why pause at reel each lad and lass?
A solemn awe pervades the mass;
Wondering they see the travellers pass,
The horsemen journey-worn,
And, in the midst, that blinded van
So hearse-like; while, from man to man,
"Is it of Death," in whispers ran,
"This spectacle forlorn?"

XVII.

Bright are thy shadowy forest-bowers,
Fair Ashby-de-la-Zouche! with flowers;
The wild-deer in its covert cowers,
And, from its pine-tree old,
The startled cushat, in unrest,
Circles around its airy nest,
As forward, on its route unblest,
Aye on that waggon rolled.

XVIII.

And many a grove-encircled town,
And many a keep of old renown,
That grimly watched o'er dale and down,
They passed unheeding by;
Prone from the rocks the waters streamed,
And, 'mid the yellow harvests, gleamed
The reapers' sickles, but all seemed
Mere pictures to the eye.

XIX.

Behold a tournay on the green!
The tents are pitched—the tilters keen
Gambol the listed lines between—
The motley crowds around
For jibe, and jest, and wanton play
Are met—a merry holiday;
And glide the lightsome hours away
In mirth, to music's sound.

XX.

And hark! the exulting shouts that rise,
As, cynosure of circling eyes,
Beauty's fair queen awards the prize
To knight that lowly kneels.
"Make way—make way!" is heard aloud—
Like red sea waters part the crowd,
And, scornful of that pageant proud,
On grinding rush the wheels!

XXI.

Hundreds and hamlets far from sight,
By lonely granges through the night
They camped ; and, ere the morning light
Crimsoned the orient, they,
By royal road or baron's park,
Waking the watchful ban-dog's bark,
Before the first song of the lark,
Were on their southward way.

XXII.

By Althorpe, and by Oxendon,
Without a halt they hurried on,
Nor paused by that fair cross of stone,
Now for the first time seen,
(For death's dark billows overwhelm
Both jewelled braid, and knightly helm !)
Raised, by the monarch of the realm,
To Eleanor his queen.[12]

XXIII.

Five times through darkness and through day,
Since crossing Tweed, with fresh relay
Ever in wait, their forward way
That cavalcade had held ;
Now joy ! for on the weary wights
Loomed London from the Hampstead heights,
As, by the opal morning, night's
Thin vapours were dispell'd.

XXIV.

With spur on heel, and spear in rest,
And buckler'd arm, and trellised breast,
Closer around their charge they press'd—
On whirled, with livelier roll,
The wheels begirt with prancing feet,
And arms, a serried mass complete,
Until, by many a stately street,
They reached their destined goal.

XXV.

Grim Westminster! thy pile severe
Struck to the heart like sudden fear;
"Hope flies from all that enter here!"
Seemed graven on its crest.
The moat o'erpassed, at warn of bell,
Down thundering the portcullis fell,
And clang'd the studded gates—a knell
Despairing and unblest.

XXVI.

Ye guardian angels! that fulfil
Heaven's high decrees, and work its will—
Ye thunderbolts! launched forth to kill—
Where was it then ye slept,
When, foe-bemocked, in prison square,
To death fore-doomed, with dauntless air,
From out that van,
A shackled man,
Sir William Wallace stept!

DISENCHANTMENT.

I.

Although from Adam stained with crime,
A halo girds the path of time,
As 'twere things humble with sublime,
Divine with mortal blending,
And that which is, with that which seems—
Till blazoned o'er were Jacob's dreams
With Heaven's angelic hosts, in streams
Descending and ascending.

II.

Ask of the clouds, why Eden's dyes
Have vanished from the sunset skies?
Ask of the winds, why harmonies
Now breathe not in their voices?
Ask of the spring, why from the bloom
Of lilies comes a less perfume?
And why the linnet, 'mid the broom,
Less lustily rejoices?

III.

Silent are now the sylvan tents ;
The elves to airy elements
Resolved are gone ; grim-castled rents
No more show demons gazing,
With evil eyes, on wandering men ;
And, where the dragon had his den
Of fire, within the haunted glen,
Now herds unharmed are grazing.[13]

IV.

No more, as horror stirs the trees,
The path-belated peasant sees
Witches adown the sleety breeze,
To Lapland flats careering :[14]
As on through storms the Sea-kings sweep,
No more the Kraken huge, asleep,
Looms like an island, 'mid the deep,
Rising and disappearing.

V.

No more, reclined by Cona's streams,
Before the seer, in waking dreams,
The dim funereal pageant gleams,
Futurity fore-showing ;
No more, released from churchyard trance,
Athwart blue midnight spectres glance,
Or mingle in the bridal dance,
To vanish ere cock-crowing.[15]

VI.

Alas! that Fancy's fount should cease!
In rose-hues limn'd, the myths of Greece
Have waned to dreams—the Colchian fleece,
And labours of Alcides:
Nay, Homer, even thy mighty line—
Thy living tale of Troy divine—
The sceptic scholiast doubts if thine,
Or Priam, or Pelides!

VII.

As silence listens to the lark,
And orient beams disperse the dark,
How sweet to roam abroad, and mark
Their gold the fields adorning!
But when we think of where are they,
Whose bosoms like our own were gay,
While April gladdened life's young day,
Joy takes the garb of mourning.

VIII.

Warm-gushing through the heart come back
The thoughts that brightened boyhood's track;
And hopes, as 'twere from midnight black,
All star-like reawaken;
Until we feel how, one by one,
The faces of the loved are gone,
And grieve for those left here alone,
Not those who have been taken.

IX.

The past returns in all we see,
The billowy cloud and branching tree ;
In all we hear—the bird and bee
Remind of pleasures cherish'd ;
When all is lost it loved the best,
Oh ! pity on that vacant breast,
Which would not rather be at rest
Than pine amid the perish'd !

X.

A balmy eve ! the round white moon
Imparadises midmost June,
Tune trills the nightingale on tune—
What magic ! when a lover,
To him who, now grey-haired and lone,
Bends o'er the sad sepulchral stone
Of her, whose heart was once his own :
Ah ! bright dream briefly over !

XI.

See how from port the vessel glides
With streamered masts, o'er halcyon tides ;
Its laggard course the sea-boy chides,
All loth that calms should bind him ;
But distance only chains him more,
With love-links, to his native shore,
And sleep's best dream is to restore
The home he left behind him.

XII.

To sanguine youth's enraptured eye
Heaven has its reflex in the sky,
The winds themselves have melody,
Like harp some seraph sweepeth;
A silver decks the hawthorn bloom,
A legend shrines the mossy tomb,
And spirits throng the starry gloom,
Her reign when midnight keepeth.

XIII.

Silence o'erhangs the Delphic cave;
Where strove the bravest of the brave,
Naught met the wandering Byron, save
A lone deserted barrow;
And Fancy's iris waned away
When Wordsworth ventured to survey,
Beneath the light of common day,
The dowie dens of Yarrow.

XIV.

Little we dream—when life is new,
And Nature fresh and fair to view,
When throbs the heart to pleasure true,
As if for naught it wanted—
That year by year, and ray by ray,
Romance's sunlight dies away,
And long before the hair is grey,
The heart is disenchanted.

THE SYCAMINE.

I.

THE frail yellow leaves they are falling,
As the wild winds sweep the grove;
Plashy and dank is the sward beneath,
And the sky it is grey above.

II.

Foaming adown the dark rocks,
Dirge-like, the waterfall
Mourns, as if mourning for something gone,
For ever beyond its call.

III.

Sing, redbreast, from the russet spray—
Thy song with the season blends;
For the bees have left us with the blooms,
And the swallows were summer friends.

IV.

The hawthorn bare, with berries sere,
And the bramble by the stream,
Matted, with clay on its yellow trails,
Decay's wan emblems seem.

V.

On this slope bank how oft we lay
In shadow of the sycamine tree ;
Pause, hoary Eld, and listen now—
'Twas but the roaring of the sea !

VI.

Oh, the shouts and the laughter of yore—
How the tones wind round the heart !
Oh, the faces blent with youth's blue skies—
And could ye so depart !

VII.

The crow screams back to the wood,
And the sea-mew to the sea,
And earth seems to the foot of man
No resting-place to be.

VIII.

Search ye the corners of the world,
And the isles beyond the main,
And the main itself, for those who went
To come not back again !

IX.

The rest are a remnant scatter'd
'Mid the living; and, for the dead,
Tread lightly o'er the churchyard mounds—
Ye know not where ye tread!

THE

COVENANTERS' NIGHT-HYMN.

MAKING all allowances for the many over-coloured pictures, nay, often one-sided statements of such apologetic chroniclers as Knox, Melville, Calderwood, and Row, it is yet difficult to divest the mind of a strong leaning towards the old Presbyterians and champions of the Covenant; probably because we believe them to have been sincere, and know them to have been persecuted and oppressed. Nevertheless, the liking is as often allied to sympathy as to approbation; for a sifting of motives exhibits, in but too many instances, a sad commixture of the chaff of selfishness with the grain of principle—an exhibition of the over and over again played game, by which the gullible many are made the tools of the crafty and designing few. Be it allowed that, both in their preachings from the pulpit and their teachings by example, the Covenanters frequently proceeded more in the spirit of fanaticism than of sober religious feeling; and that, in their antagonistic ardour, they did not hesitate to carry the persecutions of which they themselves so justly complained into the camp of the adversary—sacrificing

in their mistaken zeal even the ennobling arts of architecture, sculpture, and painting, as adjuncts of idol-worship—still it is to be remembered that the aggression emanated not from them; and that the rights they contended for were the most sacred and invaluable that man can possess—the freedom of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience. They sincerely believed that the principles which they maintained were right; and their adherence to these with unalterable constancy, through good report and through bad report; in the hour of privation and suffering, of danger and death; in the silence of the prison-cell, not less than in the excitement of the battle-field; by the blood-stained hearth, on the scaffold, and at the stake,—forms a noble chapter in the history of the human mind—of man as an accountable creature.

Be it remembered, also, that these religious persecutions were not mere things of a day, but were continued through at least three entire generations. They extended from the accession of James VI. to the English throne, (*testibus* the rhymes of Sir David Lindsay, and the classic prose of Buchanan,) down to the Revolution of 1688—almost a century, during which many thousands tyrannically perished, without in the least degree loosening that tenacity of purpose, or subduing that *pervervidum ingenium*, which, according to Thuanus, have been national characteristics.

As in almost all similar cases, the cause of the Covenanters, so strenuously and unflinchingly maintained, ultimately resulted in the victory of Protestantism—that victory, the fruits of which we have seemed of late years so readily inclined to throw away; and, in its rural districts more especially, of nothing are the people more justly proud than—

> ——"The tales
> Of persecution and the Covenant,
> Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour."

So says Wordsworth. These traditions have been emblazoned by the pens of Scott, M'Crie, Galt, Hogg, Wilson, Grahame, and Pollok, and by the pencils of Wilkie, Harvey, and Duncan, —each regarding them with the eye of his peculiar genius.

In reference to the following stanzas, it should be remembered that, during the holding of their conventicles—which frequently, in the more troublous time, took place amid mountain solitudes, and during the night—a sentinel was stationed on some commanding height in the neighbourhood, to give warning of the approach of danger.

I.

Ho! plaided watcher of the hill,
What of the night?—what of the night?
The winds are lown, the woods are still,
The countless stars are sparkling bright;
From out this heathery moorland glen,
By the shy wildfowl only trod,
We raise our hymn, unheard of men,
To Thee, an omnipresent God!

II.

Jehovah! though no sign appear,
Through earth our aimless path to lead,
We know, we feel Thee ever near,
A present help in time of need—
Near, as when, pointing out the way,
For ever in thy people's sight,
A pillared wreath of smoke by day,
Which turned to fiery flame at night!

III.

Whence came the summons forth to go?—
From Thee awoke the warning sound!
"Out to your tents, O Israel! Lo!
The heathen's warfare girds thee round.
Sons of the faithful! up—away!
The lamb must of the wolf beware;
The falcon seeks the dove for prey;
The fowler spreads his cunning snare!"

IV.

Day set in gold; 'twas peace around—
'Twas seeming peace by field and flood:
We woke, and on our lintels found
The cross of wrath—the mark of blood.
Lord! in thy cause we mocked at fears,
We scorned the ungodly's threatening words—
Beat out our pruning-hooks to spears,
And turned our ploughshares into swords!

V.

Degenerate Scotland! days have been
Thy soil when only freemen trod—
When mountain-crag and valley green
Poured forth the loud acclaim to God!—
The fire which liberty imparts,
Refulgent in each patriot eye,
And, graven on a nation's hearts,
The Word—for which we stand or die!

VI.

Unholy change! The scorner's chair
Is now the seat of those who rule;
Tortures, and bonds, and death, the share
Of all except the tyrant's tool.
That faith in which our fathers breathed,
And had their life, for which they died—
That priceless heirloom they bequeathed
Their sons—our impious foes deride!

VII.

So We have left our homes behind,
And We have belted on the sword,
And We in solemn league have joined,
Yea! covenanted with the Lord,
Never to seek those homes again,
Never to give the sword its sheath,
Until our rights of faith remain
Unfettered as the air we breathe!

VIII.

O Thou, who rulest above the sky,
Begirt about with starry thrones,
Cast from the Heaven of Heavens thine eye
Down on our wives and little ones—
From Hallelujahs surging round,
Oh! for a moment turn thine ear,
The widow prostrate on the ground,
The famished orphan's cries to hear!

IX.

And Thou wilt hear! it cannot be,
That Thou wilt list the raven's brood,
When from their nest they scream to Thee,
And in due season send them food;
It cannot be that Thou wilt weave
The lily such superb array,
And yet unfed, unsheltered, leave
Thy children—as if less than they!

X.

We have no hearths—the ashes lie
In blackness where they brightly shone;
We have no homes—the desert sky
Our covering, earth our couch alone:
We have no heritage—depriven
Of these, we ask not such on earth;
Our hearts are sealed; we seek in Heaven
For heritage, and home, and hearth!

XI.

O Salem, city of the saint,
And holy men made perfect! We
Pant for thy gates, our spirits faint
Thy glorious golden streets to see—
To mark the rapture that inspires
The ransomed, and redeemed by grace;
To listen to the seraphs' lyres,
And meet the angels face to face!

XII.

Father in Heaven! we turn not back,
Though briars and thorns choke up the path;
Rather the tortures of the rack,
Than tread the winepress of thy wrath!
Let thunders crash, let torrents shower,
Let whirlwinds churn the howling sea,
What is the turmoil of an hour,
To an eternal calm with Thee!

REQUIEM.

TO THE MUSIC OF MOZART.

I.

GONE art thou, in youthful sweetness,
Time's short changeful voyage o'er;
Now thy beauty in completeness
Blooms on Heaven's unfading shore:
What to us is life behind thee?
Darkness and despair alone!
When with sighs we seek to find thee,
Echo answers moan for moan!

II.

Not in winter's stormy bluster
Didst thou droop in pale decay,
But 'mid summer light and lustre
Pass to Paradise away.
Yes! when toned to rapture only,
Sang the birds among the bowers,
Rapt from earth to leave us lonely,
Bliss was thine and sorrow ours!

III.

Mourners, solemn vigil keeping,
Knelt in silence round thy bed;
Could they deem thee only sleeping,
When to Heaven thy spirit fled?
Yes! that spirit then was winging
Upwards from its shell of clay,
Guardian angels round it singing—
"Welcome to the realms of day!"

IV.

Less when Eve's low shadows darkling
Shut the wild flowers on the lea,
Than when Dawn's last star is sparkling,
Silence draws our thoughts to thee—
Thee—who, robed in light excelling,
Stood'st a seraph by the hearth—
Far too bright for mortal dwelling,
Far—by far too good for earth!

V.

Fare-thee-well! a track of glory
Shows where'er thy steps have been,
Making Life a lovely story,
Earth a rich, romantic scene:
Dim when Duty's way before us,
As the magnet charts the sea,
May thy pure star glowing o'er us
Point the path to Heaven and Thee!

THE MATIN CAROL.

I.

THE splendid matin sun
Is mounting upward through the orient skies;
The young day is begun,
And shadowy twilight from the landscape flies.

II.

No more the grey owls roam,
Seeking their prey 'mid duskiness and shade;
The bat hath hied him home,
And in some creviced pile a resting made.

III.

Haste, then, my love, O! haste;
The dews are melting from the fresh green grass:
Arise—no longer waste
The pleasant hours that thus so sweetly pass.

IV.

The frolic hare peeps out,
Out from her leafy covert, and looks round;
The wild birds flit about,
And fill the clear soft air with gentlest sound.

V.

Come, love! of softest blue,
Beneath the bordering trees, the stream flows on;
The night-hawk thou may'st view,
Sitting in stirless silence on his stone.

VI.

The lark soars up, soars up,
With twinkling pinions to salute the morn;
Over its foxglove cup
The wild bee hangs, winding its tiny horn.

VII.

Bright flowers of every dye,
Blossoms of odours sweet are breathing round;
The west wind wanders by,
And, kissing, bends their lithe stalks to the ground.

VIII.

All things of bliss, and love,
And gentleness, and harmony proclaim;
Echo, from out the grove,
Murmurs, as I repeat thy dear-loved name.

IX.

Haste, then, beloved, haste ;
Come to these cooling shades, and wander free :
My spirit will not taste
Earth's cup of joy till first 'tis kiss'd by thee !

STANZAS.

WHEN THOU AT EVENTIDE ART ROAMING.[16]

I.

When thou at eventide art roaming
Along the elm-o'ershadow'd walk,
Where fast the eddying stream is foaming,
And falling down—a cataract,
'Twas there with thee I wont to talk ;
Think thou upon the days gone by,
And heave a sigh.

II.

When sails the moon above the mountains,
And cloudless skies are purely blue,
And sparkle in her light the fountains,
And darker frowns the lonely yew,
Then be thou melancholy too,
While pausing on the hours I proved
With thee, beloved.

III.

When wakes the dawn upon thy dwelling,
And lingering shadows disappear,
As soft the woodland songs are swelling
A choral anthem on thine ear,
Muse—for that hour to thought is dear,
And then its flight remembrance wings
To by-past things.

IV.

To me, through every season, dearest;
In every scene, by day, by night,
Thou, present to my mind, appearest
A quenchless star, for ever bright;
My solitary, sole delight;
Where'er I am, by shore—at sea—
I think of thee!

REMEMBERED BEAUTY.

A holy image,
Shrined in the soul, for ever beautiful,
Undimm'd with earth—its tears—its weaknesses—
And changeless.

ANSTER.

Long years have pass'd; but yet, in silent mood,
When pleasure to the heart is but a dream,
And life with cheerless gloom is canopied;
Amidst my musings, when I stray alone
Through moorland wastes and woodland solitudes;
Or when, at twilight, by the hearth I sit,
In loneliness and silence, bursting through
The shadows of my reverie, appears,
In undecay'd perfection, the same smile,
The same bewitching and seraphic form.
It cannot pass away—it haunts me still;
From slumber waking on my midnight couch,
Methinks I see it floating beautiful
Before me—still before me, like a star
O'er the dark outline of a mountain-steep;
And, when the glory of the crimson morn,
Tinging the honeysuckle flowers, breaks in,

There still it passes o'er the pulseless mind,
Revolving silently the by-past times,
Quiet and lovely, like a rainbow-gleam
O'er tempests that have shower'd and pass'd away.

Long years have pass'd—we cannot soon forget
The lightning-gleams that flash upon the heart;
Nor pass, amid the solitudes of life,
Its bright green spots unnoticed, or its flowers.
Long years have passed—'twas on a festal night,
A night of innocent mirth and revelry,
When, bounding, throbb'd the youthful heart, and smiles
Play'd, meteor-like, upon a hundred cheeks,
As if contagiously; while sparkling lamps
Pour'd forth a deluging lustre o'er the crowd,
And music, like a Syren, weaned the heart
From every grovelling and contentious thought,
From every care; amid familiar friends,
The lovely and the faithful, glad I stood
To mark them all so joyous; as I gazed,
An eye encounter'd mine, that startled me—
Sure never breathing creature was more fair!
Amid the mazy movements of the dance,
Accordant to the music's finest tone,
Sylph-like she floated; graceful as the swan
Oaring its way athwart a summer lake,
Her step almost as silent: as she stood,
Again that heavenly eye encounter'd mine.
Pale was the brow, as if serenest thought,
Quiet, and innocence, alone dwelt there;

But yet around the rosy lips there play'd
A laughing smile, like Hebe's, which dispell'd
Its calmness, and betoken'd life and joy.
Her golden tresses, from her temples pale,
And from her rounded alabaster neck,
Were filleted up with roses and gay flowers,
Wove like a garland round them: skiey robes,
The tincture of the young Year's finest blue,
Were thrown in beauty round her graceful form,
And added to its brightness; so that he
Who dwelt on it delighted, almost fear'd
The vision would disperse into the air,
And mock his gaze with vacancy.—'Tis past.
Years have outspread their shadowy wings between,
But yet the sound of that fair lady's voice
Hath been a music to my soul unheard;
The lightning of that glorious countenance,
The shining riches of that golden hair,
The fascination of those magic eyes,
The smiling beauty of those small red lips,
The graceful lightness of that angel form,
Have been to me but things of memory.
Before that festal night, 'mid woman-kind,
That peerless form did never bless my view;
It was to me a blank—a thing unknown:
After that festal night, my wistful eyes
Have never feasted on its loveliness;
I know not whence it came—or whither fled—
I know not by what human name 'tis call'd—
Whether 'tis yet a blossom of this earth,

Or, long ere this, transplanted into Heaven.
It is to me a treasure of the mind,
A picture in the chambers of the brain
Hung up, and framed—a flower from youthful years,
Breath'd on by heavenly zephyrs, and preserved
Safe from decay, in everlasting bloom!

It cannot be that, for abiding-place,
This earth alone is ours; it cannot be
That, for a fleeting span of chequer'd years,
Of broken sunshine, cloudiness, and storm,
We tread this sublunary scene—and die,
Like winds that wail amid a dreary wood,
To silence and to nothingness; like waves
That murmur on the sea-beach, and dissolve.
Why, then, from out the temple of our hearts,
Do aspirations spring, that overleap
The barriers of our mortal destiny,
And chain us to the very gates of Heaven?
Why does the beauty of a vernal morn,
When earth, exulting from her wintry tomb,
Breaks forth with early flowers, and song of birds,
Strike on our hearts, as ominous, and say,
Surely man's fate is such?—At summer eve,
Why do the faëry, unsubstantial clouds,
Trick'd out in rainbow garments, glimmer forth
To mock us with their loveliness, and tell
That earth hath not of these?—The tiny stars,
That gem in countless crowds the midnight sky,
Why were they placed so far beyond the grasp

Of sight and comprehension, so beyond
The expansion of our limited faculties,
If, one day, like the isles that speck the main,
These worlds shall spread not open to our view?—
Why do the mountain-steeps their solitudes
Expand?—or, roaring down the dizzy rocks,
The mighty cataracts descend in foam?—
Is it to show our insignificance?
To tell us we are nought?—And, finally,
If born not to behold supernal things,
Why have we glimpses of beatitude—
Have images of majesty and beauty
Presented to our gaze—and taken from us?—
For Thou art one of such, most glorious form,
A portion of some unseen paradise,
That visitest the silence of my thought,
Rendering life beautiful.

THE VETERAN TAR.

I.

A MARINER, whom fate compell'd
To make his home ashore,
Lived in yon cottage on the mount,
With ivy mantled o'er;
Because he could not breathe beyond
The sound of ocean's roar.

II.

He placed yon vane upon the roof
To mark how stood the wind;
For breathless days and breezy days
Brought back old times to mind,
When rock'd amid the shrouds, or on
The sunny deck reclined.

III.

And in his spot of garden ground
All ocean plants were met—
Salt lavender, that lacks perfume,
With scented mignonette;
And, blending with the roses' bloom,
Sea-thistles freak'd with jet.

IV.

Models of cannon'd ships of war,
Rigg'd out in gallant style;
Pictures of Camperdown's red fight,
And Nelson at the Nile,
Were round his cabin hung,—his hours,
When lonely, to beguile.

V.

And there were charts and soundings, made
By Anson, Cook, and Bligh;
Fractures of coral from the deep,
And storm-stones from the sky;
Shells from the shores of gay Brazil;
Stuff'd birds, and fishes dry.

VI.

Old Simon had an orphan been,
No relative had he;
Even from his childhood was he seen
A haunter of the quay;
So, at the age of raw thirteen,
He took him to the sea.

VII.

Four years on board a merchantman
He sail'd—a growing lad;
And all the isles of western Ind,
In endless summer clad,
He knew, from pastoral St Lucie,
To palmy Trinidad.

VIII.

But sterner life was in his thoughts,
When, 'mid the sea-fight's jar,
Stoop'd Victory from the batter'd shrouds,
To crown the British tar;
'Twas then he went, a volunteer,
On board a ship of war.

IX.

Through forty years of storm and shine
He plough'd the changeful deep;
From where beneath the tropic line
The winged fishes leap,
To where frost seals the Polar seas
In everlasting sleep.

X.

I recollect the brave old man:
Methinks upon my view
He comes again—his varnish'd hat,
Striped shirt, and jacket blue;
His bronzed and weather-beaten cheek,
Keen eye, and plaited queue.

XI.

Yon turfen bench the veteran loved,
Beneath the threshold tree;
For from that spot he could survey
The broad expanse of sea—
That element, where he so long
Had been a rover free.

XII.

And lighted up his faded face,
When, drifting in the gale,
He with his telescope could catch,
Far off, a coming sail:
It was a music to his ear,
To list the sea-mew's wail.

XIII.

Oft would he tell how, under Smith,
Upon the Egyptian strand,
Eager to beat the boastful French,
They join'd the men on land,
And plied their deadly shots, intrench'd
Behind their bags of sand.

XIV.

And when he told, how, thro' the Sound,
With Nelson in his might,
They pass'd the Cronberg batteries,
To quell the Dane in fight,
His voice with vigour fill'd again,
His veteran eye with light.

XV.

But chiefly of hot Trafalgar
The brave old man would speak;
And, when he show'd his oaken stump,
A glow suffused his cheek,
While his eye fill'd—for wound on wound
Had left him worn and weak.

XVI.

Ten years, in vigorous old age,
Within that cot he dwelt;
Tranquil as falls the snow on snow,
Life's lot to him was dealt:
But came infirmity at length,
And slowly o'er him stealt.

XVII.

We miss'd him on our seaward walk:
The children went no more
To listen to his evening talk,
Beside the cottage door;
Grim palsy held him to the bed,
Which health eschew'd before.

XVIII.

'Twas harvest time: day after day
Beheld him weaker grow;
Day after day, his labouring pulse
Became more faint and slow;
For, in the chambers of his heart,
Life's fire was burning low.

XIX.

Thus did he weaken, did he wane,
Till frail as frail could be;
But duly at the hour which brings
Homeward the bird and bee,
He made them prop him in his couch,
To gaze upon the sea.

XX.

And now he watch'd the moving boat,
And now the moveless ships,
And now the western hills remote,
With gold upon their tips,
As ray by ray the mighty sun
Went down in calm eclipse.

XXI.

Welcome as homestead to the feet
Of pilgrim travel-tired,
Death to old Simon's dwelling came,
A thing to be desired;
And, breathing peace to all around,
The man of war expired.

THE RUINED NUNNERY.

I.

'Twas a tempestuous eve; the rains,
Over the mountains and the plains,
Pour'd down with ceaseless noise;
The forest depths were in a roar;
The sea came foaming to the shore,
And through the rocky caverns hoar
Howl'd with a giant's voice.

II.

At length the winds began to still,
As Hesper crown'd the southern hill:
The rains began to cease;
Night's star-bestudded map unfurl'd,
Up from the earth the black clouds curl'd;
And the white moon rose o'er the world,
As 'twere to herald Peace.

III.

Lull'd was the turmoil on the shore,
While the fierce rack that, just before,
With tempest laden deep,
Swept through the sad and sullen sky,
Grew bright, and, in serenity,
Beneath the quiet moon's calm eye,
Appear'd to fall asleep.

IV.

The green trees twinkled in the vale;
Pure was the radiance—pure and pale,
With beauty silvering o'er
The verdant lawn, and lapsing rill;
There was a silence on the hill;
Hush'd were the winds; and all grew still,
Except the river's roar.

V.

Leaving the fireside's circling talk,
'Twas then my solitary walk
Amid the fields I took,
To where a ruin'd convent stood,
As 'twere the abode of solitude,
Left, 'mid the relics of its wood,
To stockdove and to rook.

VI.

Lorn was the scene and desolate,
Rank weeds o'ergrew its mouldering gate:
I clomb its fragile stair;
The moonbeams piercing through the gloom
Of each untenanted lone room,
Where erst the censer shed perfume,
Show'd only ruin there.

VII.

Pleased with the prospect—pleased, yet pain'd,
The summit of the walls I gain'd,
And leant me there alone,
Beneath the solitary sky;
While, in the moon's pale argentry,
As woke the wild bird's fitful cry,
The dewy wall-flowers shone.

VIII.

The jasmine seem'd alive with bees;
Blossoms were on the cultur'd trees,
That now were gnarl'd and wild;
And rose Devotion from each cell,
Where holy Nun, at sound of bell,
Did daily kneel and worship well
The Mother and her Child.

IX.

How came they there, these lovely forms?—
Was it to shield them from the storms
Of this unquiet earth,
That from its sinful crowds they fled?
Or, warn'd by Conscience, did the dread
Of Judgment o'er each guilty head,
To Penitence give birth?

X.

These questions, who may answer?—Lo!
With eyes of thought, and cheek of woe,
That pale and sighing maid,
Devoutly kneeling at the shrine—
Her true love, bound for Palestine,
Sank with his warriors in the brine,
To sudden death betray'd.

XI.

Life's day for her had found its close :
Straight from her brow she pluck'd the rose;
And from her cheek the bloom
Faded like tints from autumn flowers,
When over earth the tempests lowers,
And rude winds leave the saddening bowers
To Winter's sullen gloom.

XII.

And lo ! that other by her side,
Hopeful so soon to be a bride ;
Blue eyes and auburn hair,
That might have chain'd all human hearts,
Were vain—her fickle knight departs—
Her soul's deep-cherish'd vision thwarts—
And leaves her to despair.

XIII.

With indignation and amaze,
She saw her rival, heard the praise,
Once deem'd her own, bestow'd
On stranger charms; and she could not—
Forlorn, forsaken, and forgot—
Uphold the burden of her lot,
But to its misery bow'd.

XIV.

Then, in her solitary cell,
It yielded painful joy to dwell
On raptures that had been:
Her full heart to her throat would rise,
While turning oft her tearful eyes
From changeful earth to changeless skies,
All cloudless and serene.

XV.

A third—around her, one by one,
Like vernal flowers in summer's sun,
Those whom she loved had fled;
So, bowing to her cheerless fate—
Home left unto her desolate—
Her pilgrim step sought out this gate,
To commune with the dead.

XVI.

There Recollection's sunlight streams;
And, in the silence of her dreams,
She hears their voices still—
Hears the blue rill amid its flowers,
As erst she heard in Childhood's hours—
Strays with them thro' the garden bowers,
And climbs her native hill.

XVII.

A fourth—her black and midnight eyes,
Wherein the abyss of passion lies,
Silently burn; but she
Loved whom her kindred sanction'd not:
He fell—she sought the bloody spot—
And, to forget and be forgot,
Was hither doom'd to flee.

XVIII.

Yes, far more dear was he, though dead,
Than all yet living things; she fled
A world which gave but pain,
Heroic constancy to prove;
And nursing, for his sake, a love
Which nought could change, and none could move,
Disdain'd to love again.

XIX.

Yes! there she strove to yield her soul
Unto Religion's calm control;
But Memory's charms outlast
Long years of solitude and gloom;
And oft his image, from the tomb,
To bless her came, in beauty's bloom,
When hours of prayer were past.

XX.

Thoughts sad and strange came thronging fast,
As, through the pale and peopled past,
Keen Fancy clove her way:
The scene around me changed, and bright
Lay pile and garden on my sight,
As once they shone in summer light,
Ere yet they knew decay.

XXI.

Dreams—fancies—visions—such are these;
Yet on the musing mind they seize,
When, on an eve like this
On which I write, through far-past things
Her flight lone Meditation wings,
And to the dallying spirit brings
Pictures of bale or bliss.

XXII.

And ye, grey convent walls, teach well,
That onward centuries only swell
The catalogue of change;
Yea, while we look around, and scan
What happen'd in our own brief span,
Things, which occurr'd since life began,
Even to ourselves seem strange.

XXIII.

Then, what is life?—'tis like a flower
That blossoms through one sunny hour;
A bright illusive dream;
A wave that melts upon the shore;
A lightning flash that straight is o'er;
A phantom seen—then seen no more;
A bubble on the stream!

XXIV.

Look on the churchyard's yellow skull—
Is not the contemplation full
Of serious thought and deep?
'Tis ownerless; but yet ere fled
The spirit, Love upheld that head,
And friends hung round a dying bed,
To hide their eyes and weep.

XXV.

Thus generations pass away—
'Tis renovation and decay—
'Tis childhood and old age:
Like figures in the wizard's glass,
In long succession on we pass,
Act our brief parts; and then, alas!
Are swept from off the stage!

THE HOUR OF THOUGHT.

I.

THE orb of day is sinking,
The star of eve is winking,
The silent dews
Their balm diffuse,
The summer flowers are drinking;
The valley shades grow drearer,
As the sky above glows clearer;
Around all swim,
Perplexed and dim,
Yet the distant hills seem nearer—
O'er their tops the eye may mark
The very leaves, distinct and dark.

II.

Now eastern skies are lightening,
Wood, mead, and mount are brightening,
Sink in the blaze
The stellar rays,
The clouds of heaven are whitening;

Now the curfew-bell is ringing,
Now the birds forsake their singing,
The beetle fly
Hums dully by,
And the bat his flight is winging;
While the glowing, glorious moon,
Gives to night the smile of noon.

III.

O! then in churchyards hoary,
With many a mournful story,
'Tis sweet to stray,
'Mid tombstones grey,
And muse on earthly glory:
Thoughts, deeds, and days departed,
Up from the past are started,
Time's noon and night,
Its bloom and blight,
Hopes crown'd with bliss, or thwarted;
Halcyon peace or demon strife,
Sweetening or disturbing life.

IV.

Then wake the dreams of childhood,
Its turbulent or mild mood—
The gather'd shells,
The foxglove bells,
The bird-nest in the wild wood;

The corn fields greenly springing;
The twilight blackbird singing
Sweetly, unseen,
From chestnut green,
Till all the air is ringing;
Restless swallows twittering by,
And the gorgeous sunset sky.

v.

Then while the moon is glancing,
Through murmuring foliage dancing,
Wild fancy strays
Amid the maze
Of olden times entrancing:
She scans each strange tradition
Of dim-eyed Superstition—
The monk in hood,
With book and rood,
And nun in cell'd contrition;
Horsemen winding through the dale,
Morions dark, and shining mail.

vi.

Ah! where are they that knew us,
That then spake kindly to us?
Why thus should they
In evil day
So frigidly eschew us?

We call them—they appear not,
They listen not, they hear not;
Their course is run,
Their day is done,
They hope not, and they fear not:
Past for them are heat and cold,
Death hath penn'd them in his fold!

VII.

Above their bones unknowing,
Wild flowers and weeds are growing;
By moon or sun
Is nothing done
To them a thought bestowing:
In dark repose they wither,
Like weeds blown hither—thither—
Alone, alone,
The last Trump's tone
Shall call them up together.
Thou shalt hear it, Silence drear!
Grave oblivious, thou shalt hear!

TO INEZ,

IN ABSENCE.

Heu! quantum minus est reliquis versari, quam tui meminisse!

I.

Oh! sweetly o'er th' Atlantic sea,
The moon, with melancholy smile,
Looks down as I, beloved, on thee
Am fondly musing all the while:
And as, along the silver tide,
Its silent course the vessel steers,
I dream of days when, side by side,
We roam'd on eves of other years!

II.

Though many a land, though many a wave,
Between us rise, between us roll,
Still, like a beacon, bright to save,
Thou sheddest light upon my soul.
And though the mist of years hath pass'd,
Since first I bless'd its glorious shine,
Yet thoughts, and woes, and days amass'd,
Have only made it doubly thine!

III.

How sweetly to the pensive mind
The dreams of other days awake,
And all the joys we left behind,
No more on earth to overtake!
Our wanderings by the sandy shore,
Our walks along the twilight plain,
The raptures that we felt of yore,
And ne'er on earth shall feel again!

IV.

Unclouded Moon! o'er rippling seas
Thou lookest down in placid grace;
With sails, expanded by the breeze,
Alert, our onward path we trace;
To foreign isles and lands unknown
We steer, where every sigh shall tell,
'Mid thousands as I walk alone,
My thoughts with those far distant dwell.

V.

Unclouded Moon! 'tis sweet to mark
Thine aspect, so serene and calm,
Dispersing, vanquishing the dark,
And o'er our sorrows shedding balm.
Departed days like visions pass
Across the hot and fever'd brow,
Blest years, and vanish'd eves, alas!
When thou didst shine as thou dost now!

VI.

Oh! brightly as of yesterday
The dreams of vanish'd years awake,
The hopes that flatter'd to betray,
And left the joyless heart to break.—
I see thee, as I saw thee then,
Endow'd by youth with magic charm;
I hear thee, as I heard thee, when
We roam'd together, arm in arm.

VII.

It were a soothing thought, that thou
Mayhap, now pondering, takest delight
To raise thy white, angelic brow,
And gaze upon the lovely night;
And that the very scenes might rise
Upon thy mind's reverted eye,
That draw from me a thousand sighs,
In starting up—and passing by.

VIII.

'Twere nothing did we die—'twere nought
From life at once to pass away;
But thus to wither thought by thought,
And inch by inch, and day by day,—
To mark the lingering tints of light,
As twilight o'er the sky expands,—
To mark the wave's receding flight,
That leaves the bleak and barren sands,—

IX.

To see the stars that gem the sky
  Fade one by one,—to note the leaves
Drop from the boughs all witheringly,
  Thro' which the wintry tempest grieves—
'Tis this that chills the drooping heart,
  That still we breathe, and feel, and live,
When all the flowers of earth depart,
  And life hath not a joy to give!

X.

Not parted yet—not parted yet—
  Though oceans roll and roar between;
A star that glitters ne'er to set,
  Thou smilest bright, and shin'st serene,
Fair Inez! and the waste of life,
  All bleak and barren though it be,
Although a scene of care and strife,
  Has still a charm in having thee!

TO INEZ,

IN REMEMBRANCE.

Oh! what are thousand living loves
To one that cannot quit the dead!
BYRON.

I.

WELL—though the clouds of sorrow haste,
With dark'ning gloom, and threat'ning roll,
To blight existence to a waste,
And shut out sunshine from my soul,
Departed Inez! rather far
My musing thought would dwell on thee,
Than join the mirthful, and the jar
Of voices loud, and spirits free.

II.

Sad alteration!—here alone,
Where we so oft together sate,
With hearts, where Love's commingling tone
Had link'd us to one mutual fate,
I gaze around me—where art thou,
Whose glance was sunshine to the spot?
These roses bloom'd, as they bloom now,
But thou art—where I see thee not!

III.

Oh ! nevermore—oh ! nevermore
This earth again shall smile for me !
I'll listen to the tempest's roar,
Or gaze along the stormy sea.
And from the sunshine I will hide;
But, as the moon in silver gleams,
I'll lean me o'er the vessel's side,
And see thee in my waking dreams.

IV.

Then welcome be the doom that calls
To foreign climes my wandering way;
These echoing walks, and empty halls,—
The bloomy lilac on its spray,—
The lily in its innocence,—
The fleur-de-lis with purple vest,—
Pine for thee, vanish'd far from hence,
Removed from earth, and laid to rest.

V.

Oh ! do not breathe on Inez' lute—
'Twould make her vanish'd form appear,
Since Inez' breathing now is mute—
Since Inez' voice I cannot hear.
All music, and all melody,
The azure stream, and leafy tree,
The glories of the earth and sky
Are stripp'd of half their charms for me !

VI.

Then welcome be the flapping sail,
And welcome be the stormy main,
And never may the breezes fail,
But when they bring us back again:
And I will wander o'er the deep,
And brave the tempest's threat'ning harms,
Since not a shore to which we sweep
To me can proffer Inez' arms!

VII.

Oh! Inez, ever lost and dear,
Soon come the day, and come it must,
When I shall seek thy happier sphere,
And leave this perishable dust.
Then grief shall flee my troubled eyes,
And gloom forsake my drooping heart,
And through the fields of paradise
We two shall roam, and never part.

TO INEZ,

IN LAMENT.

I.

Oh thou! who in my happier days
Wert all to me that earth could hold,
And dearer to my youthful gaze
And yearning heart, than words have told,
Now, far from me, unmark'd and cold,
Thine ashes rest—thy relics lie;
And mouldering in earth's common mould
The frame that seem'd too fair to die!

II.

The stranger treads my haunts at morn,
And stops to scan upon the tree
Letters by Time's rude finger worn,
That bore the earthly name of thee.
To him 'tis all unknown; and he
Strays on amid the woodland scene;
And thou, to all alive but me,
Art now as thou hadst never been.

III.

Ah! little didst thou think, when I
With thee have roam'd at eventide,
Mark'd setting sun, and purpling sky,
And saunter'd by the river's side,
And gazed on thee, my destined bride,
How soon thou shouldst from hence depart,
And leave me here without a guide—
With ruin'd hopes, and broken heart.

IV.

Oh, Inez! Inez! I have seen,
Above this spot where thou art laid,
Wild flowers and weeds all rankly green,
As if in mockery wild display'd!
In sombre twilight's purple shade,
Oft by thy grave have I sojourn'd;
And as I mused o'er hopes decay'd,
Mine eyes have stream'd, my heart hath burn'd.

V.

I thought of days for ever fled,
When thou wert being's Morning Star;
I thought of feelings nourished
In secret, 'mid the world's loud jar;
I thought how, from the crowd afar,
I loved to stray, and for thee sigh;
Nor deem'd, when winds and waves a bar
Between us placed, that thou shouldst die.

VI.

I saw thee not in thy distress,
Nor ever knew that pale disease
Was preying on that loveliness,
Whose smiles all earthly ills could ease;
But, when afar upon the seas,
I call'd thy magic form to mind,
I little dreamt that charms like these
Were to Death's icy arms resign'd.

VII.

Now years have pass'd—and years may pass—
Earth not a fear or charm can have;
Ah! no—I could not view the grass,
That waves and rustles o'er thy grave!
My day is one long ruffled wave;
The night is not a lake of rest;
I dream, and nought is with me, save
A troubled scene—Despair my guest!

VIII.

Or if, mayhap, my slumbering hour
Should paint thee to mine arms restored,
Then, then, the passing dream has power
A moment's rapture to afford;
Mirth cheers the heart, and crowns the board;
My bosom's burden finds relief;
I breathe thy name—but at that word
I wake to darkness and to grief!

IX.

Well—be it so—I would not lose
The thoughts to thee that madly cleave,
For all the vacant mirth of those,
Who, heartless, think it wrong to grieve;
No—nought on earth can now retrieve
The loss my soul hath felt in thee;
Such hours of foolish joy would leave
More darkness in my misery!

X.

Inez, to me the light of life
Wert thou, when youth's fond pulse beat high,
And free from care, and far from strife,
Day follow'd day without a sigh;
All that could bless a mortal eye,
All that could charm th' immortal mind,
And wean from frail variety,
Were in thy form and soul combin'd.

XI.

Though angel now, thou yet may'st deign
To bend thy radiant look on me,
And view the breast where thou didst reign,
Still pining in its love for thee:
Then let me bend to Heaven's decree,
Support this drooping soul of mine;
And, since to thine it may not flee,
Oh! teach me humbly to resign!

HYMN TO THE MOON.

I.

How lovely is this silent scene!
How beautiful, fair lamp of night,
On stirless woods, and lakes serene,
Thou sheddest forth thy holy light;
With beam as pure, with ray as bright,
As sorrow's tear from Woman's breast,
When mourning over days departed,
That robb'd her spirit of its rest,
And left her lone and broken-hearted!

II.

Refulgent pilgrim of the sky,
Beneath thy march, within thy sight,
What varied realms outstretching lie!
Here landscapes rich with glory bright,
There lonely wastes of utter blight;
The nightingale upon the bough
Of cypress, here her song is pouring;
And there begirt with mounts of snow,
For food the famish'd bear is roaring!

III.

What marvel that the spirits high
Of eastern climes, and ancient days,
Should hail thee as a deity,
And altars to thine honour raise!
So lovely wert thou to the gaze
Of shepherds on Chaldean hills,
When summer flowers around were springing,
And when to thee a thousand rills
Throughout the quiet night were singing.

IV.

And lo! the dwarfish Laplander,
Far from his solitary home,
Dismay'd, beholds the evening star,
While many a mile remains to roam:
Thou lightest up the eastern dome,
And, in his deer-drawn chariot, he
Is hurl'd along the icy river;
And leaps his sunken heart to see
The light in his own casement quiver.

V.

Nor beautiful the less art thou,
When Ocean's gentlest breezes fan,
With gelid wing, the feverish glow
That daylight sheds on Indostan!

There, on the glittering haunts of man,
And on the amaranthine bowers,
The glory of thy smile reposes,
On hedgerows, white with jasmine flowers,
And minarets o'erhung with roses.

VI.

The exile on a foreign shore
Dejected sits, and turns his eye
To thee, in beauty evermore,
Careering through a cloudless sky.
A white cloud comes, and, passing by,
Veils thee a moment from his sight;
Then, as he rests beneath the shadows,
He thinks of many as sweet a night,
When glad he roam'd his native meadows.

VII.

Though years in stayless current roll,
Thou art as full of glory yet,
As when to Shakspeare's glowing soul,
Where mightiness and meekness met,
Thou shon'st upon his Juliet;
Tipping with silver all the grove,
And gleaming on the cheek of Beauty,
Who durst forsake, for Romeo's love,
The mandates of paternal duty.

VIII.

Enthroned amid the cloudless blue,
Majestic, silent, and alone,
Above the fountains of the dew,
Thou glidest on, and glidest on,
To shoreless seas, and lands unknown.
The presence of thy face appears,
Thou eldest born of Beauty's daughters,
A spirit traversing the spheres,
And ruling o'er the pathless waters.

MELANCHOLY.

I.

THE sun of the morning,
Unclouded and bright,
The landscape adorning
With lustre and light,
In glory and gladness
New bliss may impart;
But, O! give to sadness
And softness of heart—
A moment to ponder—a season to grieve—
The light of the moon, or the shadows of eve!

II.

Then soothing reflections
Awake to the mind,
And sweet recollections
Of friends who were kind;
Of love that was tender,
And yet could decay;
Of visions whose splendour
Time wither'd away,
In all that for brightness and beauty might seem
The painting of fancy, the work of a dream!

III.

The soft cloud of lightness,
The stars beaming through;
The pure moon of brightness,
The deep sky of blue;
The rush of the river
Through vales that are still;
The breezes that ever
Sigh lone o'er the hill,—
Are sounds that can soften, and sights that impart
A bliss to the eye, and a balm to the heart.

THE UNKNOWN GRAVE.

Man comes into the world like morning mushrooms, soon thrusting up their heads into the air, and conversing with their kindred of the same production, and as soon they turn into dust and forgetfulness.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

I.

WHO sleeps below? who sleeps below?—
It is a question idle all!
Ask of the breezes as they blow,
Say, do they heed, or hear thy call?
They murmur in the trees around,
And mock thy voice, an empty sound!

II.

A hundred summer suns have shower'd
Their fostering warmth, and radiance bright;
A hundred winter storms have lower'd
With piercing floods, and hues of night,
Since first this remnant of his race
Did tenant his lone dwelling-place.

III.

Say, did he come from East, from West?
From Southern climes, or where the Pole,
With frosty sceptre, doth arrest
The howling billows as they roll?
Within what realm of peace or strife
Did he first draw the breath of life?

IV.

Was he of high or low degree?
Did grandeur smile upon his lot?
Or, born to dark obscurity,
Dwelt he within some lowly cot,
And, from his youth to labour wed,
From toil-strung limbs wrung daily bread?

V.

Say, died he ripe, and full of years,
Bow'd down, and bent by hoary eld,
When sound was silence to his ears,
And the dim eyeball sight withheld;
Like a ripe apple falling down,
Unshaken, 'mid the orchard brown;

VI.

When all the friends that bless'd his prime,
Were vanish'd like a morning dream;
Pluck'd one by one by spareless Time,
And scatter'd in oblivion's stream;
Passing away all silently,
Like snow-flakes melting in the sea:

VII.

Or, 'mid the summer of his years,
When round him throng'd his children young,
When bright eyes gush'd with burning tears,
And anguish dwelt on every tongue,
Was he cut off, and left behind
A widow'd wife, scarce half resign'd?

VIII.

Or, 'mid the sunshine of his spring,
Came the swift bolt that dash'd him down;
When she, his chosen, blossoming
In beauty, deem'd him all her own,
And forward look'd to happier years
Than ever bless'd this vale of tears?

IX.

By day, by night, through calm and storm,
O'er distant oceans did he roam,
Far from his land, a lonely form,
The deck his walk, the sea his home:
Toss'd he on wild Biscayan wave,
Or where smooth tides Panama lave?

X.

Slept he within the tented field,
With pillowing daisies for his bed?
Captived in battle, did he yield?
Or plunge to victory o'er the dead?
Oft, 'mid destruction, hath he broke
Through reeking blades and rolling smoke?

XI.

Perhaps he perish'd for the faith—
One of that persecuted band,
Who suffer'd tortures, bonds, and death,
To free from mental thrall the land,
And, toiling for the martyr's fame,
Espoused his fate, nor found a name!

XII.

Say, was he one to science blind,
A groper in Earth's dungeon dark?
Or one who with aspiring mind
Did, in the fair creation, mark
The Maker's hand, and kept his soul
Free from this grovelling world's control?

XIII.

Hush! wild surmise!—'tis vain—'tis vain—
The summer flowers in beauty blow,
And sighs the wind, and floods the rain,
O'er some old bones that rot below;
No other record can we trace
Of fame or fortune, rank or race!

XIV.

Then, what is life, when thus we see
No trace remains of life's career?—
Mortal! whoe'er thou art, for thee
A moral lesson gloweth here;
Putt'st thou in aught of earth thy trust?
'Tis doom'd that dust shall mix with dust.

XV.

What doth it matter, then, if thus,
Without a stone, without a name,
To impotently herald us,
We float not on the breath of fame;
But, like the dewdrop from the flower.
Pass, after glittering for an hour?

XVI.

The soul decays not, freed from earth,
And earthly coils, it bursts away;—
Receiving a celestial birth,
And spurning off its bonds of clay,
It soars, and seeks another sphere,
And blooms through Heaven's eternal year!

XVII.

Do good; shun evil; live not thou,
As if at death thy being died;
Nor Error's syren voice allow
To draw thy steps from truth aside;
Look to thy journey's end—the grave!
And trust in Him whose arm can save.

DESPONDENCY.

A REVERIE.

I.

'Twas on the evening of an August day,
A day of clouds and tempests, that I stood
Within the shade of over-arching wood,
My bosom fill'd with visions of decay;
Around were strew'd the shiver'd leaves, all wet;
The boughs above were dripping; and the sky
Threw down the shadows of despondency,—
As if all melancholy things were met
To blast this lower world. I lean'd my side
Against an oak, and sigh'd o'er human pride.

II.

I thought of life, and love, and earthly bliss,
Of all we pine for, pant for, and pursue,
And found them like the mist, or matin dew,
Fading to nothingness in Time's abyss.

Our fathers, where are they? The moss is green
Upon the tablets that record their worth;
They have commingled with their parent earth,
And only in our dreams of yore are seen—
Our visions of the by-past, which have fled,
To leave us wandering 'mid the buried dead.

III.

I thought of men, who look'd upon my face,
Breathing and blooming, breathless now and cold;
I heard their voices issuing from the mould,
Amid the scenes that bear of them no trace.
I thought of smiling children, who have sat
At evening on my knees, and press'd my hand,—
Their cherub features and their accents bland,—
Their innocence,—and their untimely fate;—
How soon their flower was cropt, and laid below
The turf, where daisies spring, and lilies blow.

IV.

I thought of sunless regions, where the day
Smiles not, and all is dreariness and death;
Of weltering oceans, where the winter's breath
Beats on the emerald ice and rocky bay;
I thought me of the old times,—of the halls
Of ancient castles mouldering to the dust—
Of swords, long used in war, bedimm'd with rust,
Hanging in danky vaults, upon the walls,
Where coffin'd warriors rest, amid the night
Of darkness, never tinged by morning light.

V.

The unshelter'd cattle low'd upon the plain;
The speckled frog was leaping 'mid the grass,
Down to the lakelet's edge, whose breast of glass
Was wrinkled only by the tardy rain;
Dim was the aspect of the sullen sky;
The night scowl'd gloomier down: I could not throw
From off my heart the weary weight of woe,
But loath'd the world, and coveted to die;
Beholding only in the earth and air
Omens of desolation and despair.

THE ANGLER.

Life is a dream, whose seeming truth
Is moralised in age and youth,
When all the comforts man can share
As wandering as his fancies are;
Till in a mist of dark decay
The dreamer vanish quite away.
BISHOP KING.

I.

'Twas a blithe morning in the golden month
Of July, when, in pride of summer power,
The sun enliven'd nature: dew-besprent,
A wilderness of flowers their scent exhaled
Into the soft, warm zephyr; early a-foot,
On public roads, and by each hedge-way path,

From the far North, and from Hibernia's strand,
With vestures many-hued, and ceaseless chat,
The reapers to the coming harvest plied—
Father and mother, stripling, and young child
On back or shoulder borne. I trode again
A scene of youth, bright in its natural lines
Even to a stranger's eyes when first time seen,
But sanctified to mine by many a fond
And faithful recognition. O'er the Esk,
Swoln by nocturnal showers, the hawthorn hung
Its garland of green berries, and the bramble
Trail'd 'mid the camomile its ripening fruit.
Most lovely was the verdure of the hills—
A rich, luxuriant green, o'er which the sky
Of blue, translucent, clear without a cloud,
Outspread its arching amplitude serene.
With many a gush of music, from each brake
Sang forth the choral linnets; and the lark,
Ascending from the clover field, by fits
Soar'd as it sang, and dwindled from the sight.
The cushat stood amidst the topmost boughs
Of the tall tree, his white-ring'd neck aslant,
Down thro' the leaves to see his brooding mate.
'Mid the tall meadow grass the ox reclined,
Or bent his knee, or from beneath the shade
Of the broad beech, with ruminant mouth, gaz'd forth.
Rustling with wealth, a tissue of fair fields
Outstretch'd to left and right in luxury;
And the fir forests on the upland slopes
Contrasted darkly with the golden grain.

II.

Embathed in beauty pass'd before my sight,
Like blossoms that with sunlight shut and ope,
The half-lost dreams of many a holiday,
In boyhood spent on that blue river side
With those whose names, even now, as alien sounds
Ring in the ear, though then our cordial arms
Enwreathed each other's necks, while on we roam'd,
Singing or silent, pranksome, ne'er at rest,
As life were but a jocund pilgrimage,
Whose pleasant wanderings found a goal in heaven.
But when I reach'd a winding of the stream,
By hazels overarch'd, whose swollen nuts
Hung in rich clusters, from the marginal bank
Of yellow sand, ribb'd by receding waves,
I scared the ousel, that, like elfin sprite,
Amid the water-lilies lithe and green,
Zig-zagg'd from stone to stone; and, turning round
The sudden jut, reveal'd before me stood,
Silent, within that solitary place—
In that green solitude so calm and deep—
An aged angler, plying wistfully,
Amid o'erhanging banks and shelvy rocks,
Far from the bustle and the din of men,
His sinless pastime. Silver were his locks,
His figure lank; his dark eye, like a hawk's,
Glisten'd beneath his hat of whitest straw,
Lightsome of wear, with gut and flies begirt:
The osier creel, athwart his shoulders slung,
Became full well his coat of velveteen,

Square-tail'd, four-pocket'd, and worn for years,
As told by weather stains. His quarter-boots,
Lash'd with stout leather-thongs, and ankles bare,
Spoke the adept—and of full many a day,
Through many a changeable and chequer'd year,
By mountain torrent, or smooth meadow stream,
To that calm sport devoted. O'er him spread
A tall, broad sycamore; and, at his feet,
Amid the yellow ragwort, rough and high,
An undisturbing spaniel lay, whose lids,
Half-opening, told his master my approach.

III.

I turn'd away, I could not bear to gaze
On that grey angler with his rod and line;
I turn'd away—for to my heart the sight
Brought back, from out the twilight labyrinth
Of bypast things, the memory of a day,
So sever'd from the present by the lapse
Of many a motley'd, life-destroying year,
That on my thoughts the recognition came
Faintly at first—as breaks the timid dawn
Above the sea, or evening's earliest star
Through the pavilion of the twilight dim—
Faintly at first; then kindling to the glow
Of that refulgent sunshine, only known
To boyhood's careless and unclouded hours.

IV.

Even yet I feel around my heart the flush
Of that calm, windless morning, glorified

With summer sunshine brilliant and intense!
A tiny boy, scarcely ten summers old,
Along blue Esk, under the whispering trees,
And by the crumbling banks, daisy-o'ergrown,
A cloudless, livelong day I trode with one
Whose soul was in his pastime, and whose skill
Upon its shores that day no equal saw.
O'er my small shoulders was the wicker creel
Slung proudly, and the net whose meshes held
The minnow, from the shallows deftly raised.
Hour after hour augmenting our success,
Turn'd what was pleasure first to pleasant toil,
Lent languor to my loitering steps, and gave
Red to the cheek, and dew-damp to the brow:
It was a day that cannot be forgot,
A jubilee in childhood's calendar,
A green hill-top seen o'er the billowy waste
Of dim oblivion's flood: and so it is,
That on my morning couch—what time the sun
Tinges the honeysuckle flowers with gold,
That cluster round the porch—and in the calm
Of evening meditation, when the past
Spontaneously unfolds the treasuries
Of half-forgotten and fragmental things
To memory's ceaseless roamings, it comes back,
Fragrant and fresh, as if 'twere yesterday.
From morn till noon, his light assiduous toil
The angler plied; and when the mid-day sun
Was high in heaven, under a spreading tree,
(Methinks I hear the hum amid its leaves!)

Upon a couch of wild-flowers down we sat
With healthful palates to our slight repast
Of biscuits, and of cheese, and bottled milk;
The sward our table, and the boughs our roof:
And O! in banquet-hall, where richest cates
Luxurious woo the pamper'd appetite,
Never did viands proffer such delight
To Sybarite upon his silken couch,
As did to us our simple fare that day.

v.

Bright shone the afternoon, say rather burn'd,
In floods of molten golden, with all its rich
Array of blossoms by that river's side—
Wild camomile, and lychnis in whose cups
The bee delights to murmur, harebells blue,
And violets breathing fragrance; nor remote
The golden furze, that to the west-wind's sigh
Lent its peculiar perfume blandly soft.
At times we near'd the wild-duck and her brood
In the far angle of some dim-seen pool,
Silent and sable, underneath the boughs
Of low hung willow; and, at times, the bleat
Of a stray lamb would bid us raise our eyes
To where it stood above us on the rock,
Knee-deep amid the broom—a sportive elf.
Enshrined in recollection, sleep those hours
So brilliant and so beautiful—the scene
So full of pastoral loveliness—the heart
With pleasure overflowing—and the sky

Pavilion'd over all, an arch of peace—
God with his fair creation reconciled:
And O! to be forgotten only with
The last fond thoughts of memory, I behold
That grand and gorgeous evening, in whose blaze
Homeward with laden panniers we return'd.
Through the green woods outshot the level rays
Of flooding sunlight, tinging the hoar bark
Of the old pine-trees, and in crimson dyes
Bathing the waste of flowers that sprang beneath;
It was an hour of Paradise restored—
Eden forth mirror'd to the view again,
Ere Happiness had yet forsook its bowers,
Or sinless creatures own'd the sway of death.
All was repose, and peace, and harmony;
The flocks upon the soft knolls resting lay,
Or straying nibbled at the pastures green;
Up from its clovery lurking-place, the hare
Arose; the pheasant from the coppice stray'd;
The cony from its hole disporting leapt;
The cattle in the bloomy meadows lay
Ruminant; the shy foal scarce swerved aside
At our approach from under the tall tree
Of his delight, shaking his forelocks long
In wanton play; while, overhead, his hymn,
As 'twere to herald the approach of night,
With all her gathering stars, the blackbird sang
Melodiously, mellifluously, and Earth
Look'd up, reflecting back the smiles of Heaven:
For Innocence o'er hill and dale again

Seem'd to have spread her mantle, and the voice
Of all but joy in grove and glade was hush'd.

VI.

Thro' the deep glen of Roslin—where arise
Proud castle and chapelle of high St Clair,
And Scotland's prowess speaking—we had traced
The mazy Esk by cavern'd Hawthornden,
Perch'd like an eagle's nest upon the cliffs,
And eloquent for aye with Drummond's song;
Through Melville's flowery glades; and down the park
Of fair Dalkeith, scaring the antler'd deer,
'Neath the huge oaks of Morton and of Monk,
Whispering, as stir their boughs the midnight winds.
These left behind, with purpling evening, now
We stood beside St Michael's holy fane,
With its nine centuries of gravestones girt;
And, from the slopes of Inveresk, gazed down
Upon the Firth of Forth, whose waveless tide
Glow'd like a plain of fire. In majesty,
O'ercanopied with many-vestured clouds,
The mighty sun, low in the farthest west,
With orb dilated, o'er the Grampian chain,
Mountain up-piled on mountain, huge and blue,
Was shedding his last rays adown the shores
Of Fife, with all its towns, and woods, and fields,
And bathing Ben-Ean and Ben-Ledi's peaks
In hues of amethyst. Ray after ray,
From the twin Lomond's conic heights declined,
And died away the glory; and, at length,

As sank the last, low horizontal beams,
And Twilight drew her azure curtains round,
From out the south twinkled the evening star.

VII.

Since then full often hath the snowdrop shown
Its early flower, hath summer waved its corn,
Hath autumn shed its leaves, and Arctic gales
Brought wintry desolation on their wings:
When Memory ponders on that boyish scene,
Broken seems almost every tie that links
That day to this, and to the child the man:
The world is alter'd quite in all its thoughts,
In all its works and ways, its sights and sounds—
With the same name it is another sphere,
And by another race inhabited.
The old familiar dwellings, with their trees
Coeval, mouldering wall, and dovecot rent—
The old familiar faces from the streets,
One after one have now all disappear'd,
And sober sires are they who then were sons,
Giddy and gay: a generation new
Dwells where they dwelt, whose tongues are silent quite,
Whose bodily forms are reminiscences
Fading: the leaden talisman of Truth
Hath disenchanted of its rainbow hues
The sky, and robb'd the fields of half their bloom.
I start, to conjure from the gulf of death
The myriads that have gone to come no more:
And where is he, the Angler, by whose side

That livelong day delightedly I roam'd,
While life to both a sunny pastime seem'd ?
Ask of the winds that from the Atlantic blow,
When last they stirr'd the wild-flowers on his grave!

THE TOMBLESS MAN.

A DREAM.

I.

I WOKE from sleep at midnight; all was dark,
Solemn, and silent, an unbroken calm :
It was a fearful vision, and had made
A mystical impression on my mind;
For clouds lay o'er the ocean of my thoughts
In vague and broken masses, strangely wild;
And grim imagination wander'd on
'Mid gloomy yew-trees in a churchyard old,
And mouldering shielings of the eyeless hills,
And snow-clad pathless moors on moonless nights,
And icebergs drifting from the sunless Pole,
And prostrate Indian villages, when spent
The rage of the hurricane has pass'd away,
Leaving a landscape desolate with death;
And as I turn'd me to my vanish'd dream,

Clothed in its drapery of gloom, it rose
Upon my spirit, dreary as before.

II.

Alone—alone—a desolate dreary wild,
Herbless and verdureless; low swampy moss,
Where tadpoles grew to frogs, for leagues begirt
My solitary path. Nor sight nor sound
Of moving life, except a grey curlew—
As shrieking tumbled on the timid bird,
Aye glancing backward with its coal-black eye,
Even as by imp invisible pursued—
Was seen or heard; the last low level rays
Of sunset gilded with a blood-red glow
That melancholy moor, with its grey stones
And stagnant water-pools. Aye floundering on,
And on, I stray'd, finding no pathway, save
The runlet of a wintry stream, begirt
With shelvy barren rocks; around, o'erhead,
Yea everywhere, in shapes grotesque and grim,
Towering they rose, encompassing my path,
As 'twere in savage mockery. Lo, a chasm
Yawning, and bottomless, and black! Beneath
I heard the waters in their sheer descent
Descending down, and down; and further down
Descending still, and dashing—now a rush,
And now a roar, and now a fainter fall,
And still remoter, and yet finding still,
For the white anguish of their boiling whirl,
No resting-place. Over my head appear'd,

Between the jagged black rifts bluely seen,
Sole harbinger of hope, a patch of sky,
Of deep, clear, solemn sky, shrining a star
Magnificent, that, with a holy light,
Glowing and glittering, shone into the heart,
As 'twere an angel's eye. Entranced I stood,
Drinking the beauty of that gem serene,
How long I wist not; but, when back to earth
Sank my prone eyes, I knew not where I was—
Again the scene had shifted, and the time,
From midnight to the hour when earliest dawn
Gleams in the orient, and with inky lines
The trees seem painted on the girding sky.

III.

A solemn hour!—so silent, that the sound
Even of a falling leaflet had been heard,
Was that, wherein, with meditative step,
With uncompanion'd step, measured and slow,
And wistful gaze, that to the left, the right,
Was often turn'd, as if in secret dread
Of something horrible that must be met—
Of unseen evil not to be eschew'd—
Up a long vista'd avenue I wound,
Untrodden long, and overgrown with moss.
It seem'd an entrance to the hall of gloom;
Grey twilight, in the melancholy shade
Of the hoar branches, show'd the tufted grass
With globules spangled of the fine night-dew—
So fine, that even a midge's tiny tread

Had caused them trickle down. Funereal yews,
Notch'd with the growth of centuries, stretching round
Dismal in aspect, and grotesque in shape,
Pair after pair, were ranged: where ended these,
Girdling an open semicircle, tower'd
A row of rifted plane-trees, inky-leaved,
With cinnamon-colour'd bark; and, in the midst,
Hidden almost by their entwining boughs,
An unshut gateway, musty and forlorn,
Its old supporting pillars roughly rich
With sculpturings quaint of intermingled flowers.

IV.

Each pillar held upon its top an urn,
Serpent-begirt; each urn upon its front
A face—and such a face! I turn'd away—
Then gazed again—'twas not to be forgot:—
There was a fascination in the eyes—
Even in their stony stare; like the ribb'd sand
Of ocean was the eager brow; the mouth
Had a hyena grin; the nose, compress'd
With curling sneer, of wolfish cunning spake;
O'er the lank temples, long entwisted curls
Adown the scraggy neck in masses fell;
And fancy, aided by the time and place,
Read in the whole the effigies of a fiend.
Who, and what art thou? ask'd my beating heart—
And but the silence to my heart replied!
That entrance pass'd, I found a grass-grown court,
Vast, void, and desolate; and there a house,

Baronial, grim, and grey, with Flemish roof
High-pointed, and with aspect all forlorn:
Four-sided rose the towers at either end
Of the long front, each coped with mouldering flags;
Up from the silent chimneys went no smoke;
And vacantly the deep-brow'd windows stared,
Like eyeballs dead to daylight. O'er the gate
Of entrance, to whose folding-doors a flight
Of steps converging led, startled I saw,
Oh, horrible! the same reflected face
As that on either urn; but gloomier still,
In shadow of the mouldering architrave.

v.

I would have turn'd me back—I would have fled
From that malignant, yet half-syren smile;
But magic held me rooted to the spot,
And some inquisitive horror led me on.
Entering I stood beneath the spacious dome
Of a round hall, vacant, save here and there,
Where from the panelings, in mouldy shreds,
Hung what was arras loom-work; weather-stains
In mould appear'd on the mosaic floors,
Of marble black and white—or what *was* white,
For time had yellow'd all; and opposite,
High on the wall, within a crumbling frame
Of tarnish'd gold, scowl'd down a pictured form
In the habiliments of bygone days—
With ruff, and doublet slash'd, and studded belt—
'Twas the same face—the Gorgon curls the same,

The same lynx eye, the same peak-bearded chin,
And the same nose, with sneering upward curl.

VI.

Again I would have turn'd to flee—again
Tried to elude the snares around my feet;
But struggling could not—though I knew not why,
Self-will and self-possession vaguely lost.
Horror thrill'd through me—to recede was vain;
Fear lurk'd behind in that sepulchral court,
In its mute avenue and grave-like grass;
And to proceed—where led my onward way?
Ranges of doorways branch'd on either side,
Each like the other:—one I oped, and lo!
A dim deserted room, its furniture
Withdrawn; grey, stirless cobwebs from the roof
Hanging; and its deep windows letting in
The pale, sad dawn, than darkness drearier far.
How desolate! Around its cornices
Of florid stucco shone the mimic flowers
Of art's device, carved to delight the eyes
Of those long since but dust within their graves.
The hollow hearth-place, with its fluted jambs
Of clammy Ethiop marble, whence, of yore,
Had risen the Yule-log's animating blaze
On festal faces, tomb-like, coldly yawn'd;
While o'er its centre, lined in hues of night,
Grinn'd the same features with the aspick eyes,
And fox-like watchful, though averted gaze,
The haunting demon of that voiceless home.

VII.

How silent! to the beating of my heart
I listen'd, and nought else around me heard.
How stirless! even a waving gossamer—
The mazy motes that rise and fall in air—
Had been as signs of life; when, suddenly,
As bursts the thunder-peal upon the calm,
Whence I had come the clank of feet was heard—
A noise remote, which near'd, and near'd, and near'd—
Even to the threshold of that room it came,
Where, with raised hands, spell-bound, I listening stood;
And, the door opening stealthily, I beheld
The embodied figure of the phantom head,
Garb'd in the quaint robes of the portraiture—
A veritable fiend, a life in death!

VIII.

My heart stood still, tho' quickly came my breath;
Headlong I rush'd away, I knew not where:
In frenzied haste rushing I ran; my feet
With terror wing'd, a hell-hound at my heels,
Yea! scarce three strides between us. Through a door
Right opposite I flew, slamming its weight,
To shut me from the spectre who pursued.
And lo! another room, the counterpart
Of that just left, but gloomier: on I rush'd,
Beholding o'er its hearth the grinning face,
Another and the same; the haunting face
Reflected, as it seem'd, from wall to wall!
There, opening as I shut, onward he came,

That Broucoloka, not to be escaped,
With measured tread unwearied, like the wolf's
When tracking its sure prey: forward I sprang,
And lo! another room—another face,
Alike, but gloomier still; another door,
And the pursuing fiend—and on—and on,
With palpitating heart and yielding knees,
From room to room, each mirror'd in the last.
At length I reached a porch—amid my hair
I felt his desperate clutch—outward I flung—
The open air was gain'd—I stood alone!

IX.

That welcome postern open'd on a court—
Say rather, grave-yard; gloomy yews begirt
Its cheerless walls; ranges of headstones show'd,
Each on its hoary tablature, half hid
With moss, with hemlock, and with nettles rank,
The sculptured leer of that hyena face,
Softening as backwards, thro' the waves of time,
Receded generations more remote.
It was a square of tombs—of old, grey tombs,
(The oldest of an immemorial date,)
Deserted quite—and rusty gratings black,
Along the yawning mouths of dreary vaults—
And epitaphs unread—and mouldering bones.
Alone forlorn, the only breathing thing
In that unknown, forgotten cemetery,
Reeling, I strove to stand, and all things round
Flicker'd, and wavering, seem'd to wane away,

And earth became a blank; the tide of life
Ebbing, as backward ebbs the billowy sea,
Wave after wave, till nought is left behind,
Save casual foam-bells on the barren sand.

X.

From out annihilation's vacancy,
(The elements, as of a second birth,
Kindling within, at first a fitful spark,
And then a light which, glowing to a blaze,
Fill'd me with genial life,) I seemed to wake
Upon a bed of bloom. The breath of spring
Scented the air; mingling their odours sweet,
The bright jonquil, the lily of the vale,
The primrose, and the daffodil, o'erspread
The fresh green turf; and, as it were in love,
Around the boughs of budding lilac wreathed
The honeysuckle, rich in early leaves,
Gold-tinctured now, for sunrise fill'd the clouds
With purple glory, and with aureate beams
The dew-refreshen'd earth. Up, up, the larks
Mounted to heaven, as did the angel wings
Of old in Jacob's vision; and the fly,
Awakening from its wintry sleep, once more
Spread, humming, to the light its gauzy wings.

XI.

A happy being in a happy place,
As 'twere a captive from his chains released,
His dungeon and its darkness, there I lay

Nestling, amid the sun-illumined flowers,
Revolving silently the varied scenes,
Grotesque and grim, 'mid which my erring feet
Had stumbled; and a brightness darting in
On my mysterious nightmare, something told
The what and wherefore of the effigies grim—
The wolfish, never-resting, tombless man,
Voicelessly haunting that ancestral home—
Yea of his destiny for evermore
To suffer fearful life-in-death, until
A victim suffer'd from the sons of men,
To soothe the cravings of insatiate Hell,
An agony for ages undergone—
An agony for ages to be borne—
Hope, still elusive, baffled by despair.

XII.

Thus as an eagle, from the altitude
Of the mid-sky, its pride of place attain'd,
Glances around the illimitable void,
And sees no goal, and finds no resting-place
In the blue, boundless depths—then, silently,
Pauses on wing, and with gyrations down
And down descends thorough the blinding clouds,
In billowy masses, many-hued, around
Floating, until their confines past, green earth
Once more appears, and on its loftiest crag
The nest, wherein 'tis bliss to rest his plumes
Flight-wearied; so, from farthest dreamland's shores,
Where clouds and chaos form the continents,

And reason reigns not, Fancy back return'd
To sights and sounds familiar—to the birds
Singing above, and the bright vale beneath,
With cottages and trees, and the blue sky,
And the glad waters murmuring to the sun.

LINES

WRITTEN IN THE ISLE OF BUTE.

I.

Ere yet dim twilight brighten'd into day,
Or waned the silver morning star away,
Shedding its last, lone, melancholy smile,
Above the mountain-tops of far Argyll;
Ere yet the solan's wing had brush'd the sea,
Or issued from its cell the mountain bee;
As dawn beyond the orient Cumbraes shone,
Thy northern slope, Byrone,
From Ascog's rocks, o'erflung with woodland bowers,
With scarlet fuschias, and faint myrtle flowers,
My steps essay'd; brushing the diamond dew
From the soft moss, lithe grass, and harebell blue.
Up from the heath aslant the linnet flew

Startled, and rose the lark on twinkling wing,
And soar'd away, to sing
A farewell to the severing shades of night,
A welcome to the morning's earliest light.
Thy summit gain'd, how tranquilly serene,
Beneath, outspread that panoramic scene
Of continent and isle, and lake and sea,
And tower and town, hill, vale, and spreading tree,
And rock and ruin tinged with amethyst,
Half-seen, half-hidden by the lazy mist,
Volume on volume, which had vaguely wound
The far-off hills around,
And now roll'd downwards; till on high were seen,
Begirt with sombre larch, their foreheads green.

II.

There, there when all except the lark was mute,
O beauty-breathing Bute,
On thee entranced I gazed; each moment brought
A new creation to the eye of thought:
The orient clouds all Iris' hues assumed,
From the pale lily to the rose that bloom'd,
And hung above the pathway of the sun,
As if to harbinger his course begun;
When, lo! his disc burst forth—his beams of gold
Seem'd earth as with a garment to enfold,
And from his piercing eye the loose mists flew,
And heaven with arch of deep autumnal blue
Glow'd overhead; while ocean, like a lake,
Seeming delight to take

In its own halcyon-calm, resplendent lay,
From Western Kames to far Kilchattan bay.
Old Largs look'd out amid the orient light,
With its grey dwellings, and, in greenery bright,
Lay Coila's classic shores reveal'd to sight;
And like a Vallombrosa, veil'd in blue,
Arose Mount-Stuart's woodlands on the view;
Kerry and Cowal their bold hill-tops show'd,
And Arran, and Kintyre; like rubies glow'd
The jagged clefts of Goatfell; and below,
As on a chart, delightful Rothesay lay,
Whence sprang of human life the awakening sound,
With all its happy dwellings, stretching round
The semicircle of its sunbright bay.

III.

Byrone, a type of peace thou seemest now,
Yielding thy ridges to the rustic plough,
With corn-fields at thy feet, and many a grove
Whose songs are but of love;
But different was the aspect of that hour,
Which brought, of eld, the Norsemen o'er the deep,
To wrest yon castle's walls from Scotland's power,
And leave her brave to bleed, her fair to weep;
When Husbac fierce, and Olave, Mona's king,[17]
Confederate chiefs, with shout and triumphing,
Bade o'er its towers the Scaldic raven fly,
And mock each storm-tost sea-king toiling by!—
Fair different were the days,
When flew the fiery cross, with summoning blaze,

O'er Blane's hill, and o'er Catan, and o'er Kames,
And round thy peak the phalanx'd Butesmen stood,[18]
As Bruce's followers shed the Baliol's blood,
Yea! gave each Saxon homestead to the flames!

IV.

Proud palace-home of kings! what art thou now?
Worn are the traceries of thy lofty brow!
Yet once in beauteous strength like thee were none,
When Rothesay's Duke was heir to Scotland's throne;[19]
Ere Falkland rose, or Holyrood, in thee
The barons to their sovereign bow'd the knee:
Now, as to mock thy pride,
The very waters of thy moat are dried;
Through fractured arch and doorway freely pass
The sunbeams, into halls o'ergrown with grass;
Thy floors, unroof'd, are open to the sky,
And the snows lodge there when the storm sweeps by;
O'er thy grim battlements, where bent the bow
Thine archers keen, now hops the chattering crow;
And where the beauteous and the brave were guests,
Now breed the bats, the swallows build their nests!
Lost even the legend of the bloody stair,
Whose steps went downward to thy house of prayer;
Gone is the priest, and they who worshipp'd seem
Phantoms to us—a dream within a dream;
Earth hath o'ermantled each memorial stone,
And from their tombs the very dust is gone;
All perish'd, all forgotten, like the ray
Which gilt yon orient hill-tops yesterday;

All nameless, save mayhap one stalwart knight,
Who fell with Græme in Falkirk's bloody fight—
Bonkill's stout Stewart,[20] whose heroic tale
Oft circles yet the peasant's evening fire,
And how he scorn'd to fly, and how he bled—
He, whose effigies in St Mary's choir,
With planted heel upon the lion's head,
Now rests in marble mail.
Yet still remains the small dark narrow room,
Where the third Robert, yielding to the gloom
Of his despair, heart-broken, laid him down,
Refusing food, to die; and to the wall
Turn'd his determined face, unheeding all,
And to his captive boy-prince left his crown.[21]
Alas! thy solitary hawthorn tree,
Four-centuried, and o'erthrown, is but of thee
A type, majestic ruin: there it lies,
And annually puts on its May-flower bloom,
To fill thy lonely precincts with perfume,
Yet lifts no more its green head to the skies;[22]
The last lone living thing around that knew
Thy glory, when the dizziness and din
Of thronging life o'erflow'd thy halls within,
And o'er thy top St Andrew's banner flew.

v.

Farewell! Elysian island of the west,
Still be thy gardens brighten'd by the rose
Of a perennial spring, and winter's snows
Ne'er chill the warmth of thy maternal breast!

May calms for ever sleep around thy coast,
And desolating storms roll far away,
While art with nature vies to form thy bay,
Fairer than that which Naples makes her boast!
Green link between the High-lands and the Low—
Thou gem, half claim'd by earth, and half by sea—
May blessings, like a flood, thy homes o'erflow,
And health, though elsewhere lost, be found in thee!
May thy bland zephyrs to the pallid cheek
Of sickness ever roseate hues restore,
And they who shun the rabble and the roar
Of the wild world, on thy delightful shore
Obtain that soft seclusion which they seek!
Be this a stranger's farewell, green Byrone,
Who ne'er hath trod thy heathery heights before,
And ne'er may see thee more
After yon autumn sun hath westering gone;
Though oft, in pensive mood, when far away,
'Mid city multitudes, his thoughts will stray
To Ascog's lake, blue-sleeping in the morn,
And to the happy homesteads that adorn
Thy Rothesay's lovely bay.

Ascog Lodge, East Bay, Rothesay,
September 1843.

HYMN TO THE NIGHT WIND.

UNBRIDLED Spirit, throned upon the lap
Of ebon Midnight, whither dost thou stray,
Whence didst thou come, and where is thy abode?—
From slumber I awaken, at the sound
Of thy most melancholy voice; sublime
Thou ridest on the rolling clouds which take
The forms of sphinx, or hypogriff, or car,
Like those by Roman conquerors of yore
In games equestrian used, by fiery steeds
Drawn headlong on; or choosest, all unseen,
To ride the vault, and drive the murky storms
Before thee, or bow down, with giant wing,
The wondering forests as thou sweepest by!

Daughter of darkness! when remote the noise
Of tumult, and of discord, and mankind,
When but the watch-dog's voice is heard, or wolves
That bay the silent night, or from the tower,
Ruin'd and rent, the note of boding owl,
Or lapwing's shrill and solitary cry,
When sleep weighs down the eyelids of the world,

And life is as it were not, down the sky,
Forth from thy cave, wide roaming thou dost come,
To hold nocturnal orgies.

Round the pile,
Thou moanest wistfully, of dark abbaye,
And silent charnel-house; the long lank grass,
The hemlock, and the nightshade, and the yew,
Bend at thy tread; and thro' the blacken'd rails
Fleetly thou sweepest, with a wailing voice.
Wayworn and woe-begone, the traveller
Bears on thro' paths unknown; alone he sees
The bright star's fitful twinkling, as along
Night's arch rush sullenly the darksome clouds,
And wilds and melancholy wastes, and streams
Forlorn, and joyless all; no cottage blaze
Strikes through the weary gloom; alone he hears
Thee, awful Spirit! fighting with the stream
Of rushing torrent, torturing it to foam,
And tossing it aloft; the shadowy woods
Join in the chorus, while lone shrieks and sighs
Burst on his ear, as if infernal fiends
Had burst their adamantine chains, and rush'd
To take possession of this lower world.
His bosom sinks, his spirit fails, his heart
Dies in him; and around his captive soul
Dark Superstition weaves her witching spells;
Unholy visions pass before his mind,
Dreams rayless and unhallow'd; spectres pale
Glide past with rustling garments; wormy graves

Yawn round him; while the dark and nodding plumes
Of melancholy hearses blast his view.

But not alone to inland solitudes,
To pastoral regions wide and mountains high,
Man's habitations, or the forests dark,
Are circumscribed thy visitings: Behold!
Stemming with eager prow, the Atlantic tide,
Holds on the intrepid mariner; abroad
The wings of Night brood shadowy; heave the waves
Around him, mutinous, their curling heads,
Portentous of a storm; all hands are plied,
A zealous task, and sounds the busy deck
With notes of preparation; many an eye
Is upward cast toward the clouded heaven;
And many a thought, with troubled tenderness,
Dwells on the calm tranquillity of home;
And many a heart in supplicating prayer
Breathes forth; meanwhile, the boldest sailor's cheek
Blanches; stout courage fails; young childhood's shriek,
Awfully piercing, bursts; and woman's fears
Are speechless. With a low, insidious moan,
Rush past the gales, that harbinger thy way,
And hail thy advent; gloom the murky clouds
Darker around; and heave the maddening waves
Higher their crested summits. With a glare
Unveiling but the clouds and foaming seas,
Flashes the lightning; then, with doubling peal,
Reverberating to the gates of heaven,
Rolls the deep thunder with tremendous crash,

Sublime, as if the firmament were rent
Amid the severing clouds, that pour their storms,
Commingling sea and sky.

Disturb'd, arise
The monsters of the deep, and wheel around
Their mountainous bulks unwieldy, while aloft,
Poised on the feathery summit of the wave,
Hangs the frail bark, its howlings of despair
Lost on the mocking storm. Then frantic, thou
Dost rise, tremendous Power, thy wings unfurl'd,
Unfurl'd, but nor to succour, nor to save;
Then is thine hour of triumph; with a yell,
Thou rushest on; and, with a maniac love,
Sing'st in the rifted shroud; the straining mast
Yields, and the cordage cracks. Thou churn'st the deep
To madness, tearing up the yellow sands
From their profound recesses, and dost strew
The clouds around thee, and within thy hand
Takest up the billowy tide, and dashest down
The vessel to destruction—she is not!
But, when the morning lifts her dewy eye,
And to a quiet calm the elements,
Subsiding from their fury, have dispersed,
There art thou, like a satiate conqueror,
Recumbent on the murmuring deep, thy smiles
All unrepentant of the savage wreck.

Yet sometimes art thou, Demon of the night,
An evil spirit ministering to good!—

'Mid orient realms, when sultry day hath pass'd,
Breathless; and sunlight, on the western hill,
Dies with a quick decay;[23] then, O how dear,
How welcome to the dry and thirsty glebe,
And to the night of woods, where Pagods rise,
And Bramah's priests adore their deity,
From ocean, journeying with an eagle speed,
Come the delightful fannings of thy wing!
The grateful heaven weeps down refreshing dews,
The twilight stars peep forth with glittering ray;
And earth outspreads the carpet of her flowers,
In tenderness exhaling their perfumes,
To lure within their cups thy gelid breath:
There, 'mid the azure landscape, on his roof,
Piazza-girt, watching the evening star,
Among his myrtle blooms, the Indian sits,
Delighted, as with soft refreshing sighs,
Thou wanderest past, lifting his coal-black hair:
The smiles of Vishnoo gleam along the earth;
While by high plantain groves, by limpid streams,
The maidens roam, as subtile Cambdeo lurks[24]
Behind a lotus tuft, and, from his string
Of living bees, the unerring arrow twangs:
Malignant Genii' lose the power to harm;
From Meru Mount the deities look down,
Well pleased, rejoicing in the general joy.

Nor grateful less, unto the realm where shines
Thy glittering crest, Canopus, on the verge
Of the ungirdled hemisphere, and frown

The earth-forsaking pyramids sublime:
In Nilus dipping, through the twilight sky,
Thou roam'st excursive; while, on minaret,
In solemn voice the Muezzin calls to prayer
His Moslem devotees. With thirsty beak,
The birds fly panting to the lilied verge
Of Mœris lake, where swans unnumber'd oar
Their snowy way, amid the azure sheet,
To drink refreshment; while, at thy approach,
Through all their countless multitude of leaves,
The forests murmur, like an infant pleased
Beneath a sire's caress; and nightingales
Sing to thee, through the lapses of the night.

Unsocial Power! the realms of solitude
Thou lovest, and where Desolation spreads
Her far-outstretching pinions; hoary weeds,
Like tresses hanging from the pillar'd pride
Of Balbec,[25] thou dost wave with rustling sound,
Wistfully moaning through the column'd shrines,
By men deserted, and to Silence left,
Whose shadows in the moonlight darksome stretch
O'er the dry sands. The jackall from his den,
Where ancient monarchs held their revels high,
Wondering, comes forth, disturb'd, with upturn'd nose
Scenting the breeze.

Or through Arabian plains,
Thou hold'st thy solitary way, the sands
Uptossing high, and mingling earth with heaven:[26]

'Midst of the desert, on a spot of green
Beside the well, the wearied caravans
Rest; and while slumber weighs their eyelids down,
The mountainous surges o'er their destined heads
Thou heap'st relentless. Long at Cairo wait
Their joyless friends expectant, long in vain,
Till hope deferr'd is swallowed in despair.

Farewell! dark essence of regardless will,
That wander'st where thou listest, round the world
Thine endless march pursuing; o'er the peak
Of Alpine Blanc, or through the streamy dells
Of Morven, or beyond Pacific wave
Climbing the mighty Andes, or the vales
Peruvian chusing rather, there to sway,
With creaking sound, the undulating arch
Of wild cane framed,[27] and flung athwart the depth
Of gulfy chasms; or, with demoniac howl,
While hazy clouds bedim the labouring moon,
Wafting the midnight Sisters on thy car,
To hold unhallow'd orgies on the heaths
Of northern Lapland.

Spirit! fare-thee-well!
In terror, not in love, we sing of thee!

THE SNOW.

I.

THE snow! the snow! 'tis a pleasant thing
To watch it falling, falling
Down upon earth with noiseless wing,
As at some spirit's calling:
Each flake seems a fairy parachute,
From mystic cloudland blown,
And earth is still, and air is mute,
As frost's enchanted zone.

II.

The shrubs bend down; behold the trees
Their fingery boughs stretch out
The blossoms of the sky to seize,
As they duck and drive about;
The bare hills plead for a covering,
And, ere the grey twflight,
Around their shoulders broad shall cling
An arctic cloak of white.

III.

With clapping hands, from drifted door
Of lonely shieling, peeps
The imp, to see thy mantle hoar
O'erspread the craggy steeps.
The eagle round its eyrie screams,
The hill-fox seeks the glade,
And foaming downwards rush the streams,
As mad to be delay'd.

IV.

Falling white on the land it lies,
And falling dark in the sea;
The solan to its island flies,
The crow to the thick larch-tree;
Within the penthouse struts the cock,
His draggled mates among;
While black-eyed robin seems to mock
The sadness with his song.

V.

Released from school, 'twas ours to wage,
How keenly! bloodless wars—
Tossing the balls in mimic rage,
That left their gorgeous scars;
While doublets dark were powder'd oer,
Till darkness none could find;
And valorous chiefs had wounds before,
And caitiff churls behind.

VI.

Comrades, to work!—I see him yet,
That piled-up giant grim,
To startle horse and horsemen set,
With Titan girth of limb.
Snell Sir John Frost, with crystal spear,
We hoped thou wouldst have screen'd him;
But Thaw, the traitor, lurking near,
Soon cruelly guillotined him.

VII.

The powdery snow! Alas! to me
It speaks of far-off days,
When a boyish skater mingling free
Amid the merry maze.
Methinks I see the broad ice still;
And my nerves all jangling feel,
Blent with the tones of voices shrill,
The ring of the slider's heel.

VIII.

A scene of revelry! Soon night
Drew his murky curtains round
The world, while a star of lustre bright
Peep'd from the blue profound.
Yet what cared we for darkening lea,
Or warning bell remote?
With rush and cry we scudded by,
And seized the bliss we sought.

IX.

Drift on, ye wild winds! leave no traces
Of dim and danky earth;
While eager faces fill their places
Around the blazing hearth:
Then let the stories of the glories
Of our rough sires be told;
Or tale of knight, who lady bright
From thraldom saved of old.

X.

Or let the song the charms prolong,
In music's haunting tone,
Of shores where spring's aye blossoming,
And winter is unknown;
Where zephyrs, sick with scent of flowers,
Along the lakelets play;
And lovers, wand'ring thro' the bowers,
Make life a holiday.

XI.

Sunset and snow! Lo, eve reveals
Her starr'd map to the moon,
And o'er hush'd earth a radiance steals
More bland than that of noon:
The fur-robed genii of the Pole
Dance o'er our mountains white,
Chain up the billows as they roll,
And pearl the caves with light.

XII.

The moon above the eastern fells
  Holds on a silent way;
The mill-wheel, sparr'd with icicles,
  Reflects her silver ray;
The ivy-tod, beneath its load,
  Bends down with frosty curl;
And all around seems sown the ground
  With diamond and with pearl.

XIII.

The groves are black, the hills are white,
  And, glittering in the sheen,
The lake expands—a sheet of light—
  Its willowy banks between;
From the dark sedge that skirts its edge
  The startled wild-duck springs,
While, echoing far up copse and scaur,
  The fowler's musket rings.

XIV.

From cove to cove how sweet to rove
  Around that fairy scene,
Companion'd, as along we move,
  By things and thoughts serene;—
Voiceless, except where, cranking, rings,
  The skater's curve along,
The demon of the ice, who sings
  His deep, hoarse under-song.

XV.

In days of old, when spirits held
The air, and the earth below,
When o'er the green were, tripping, seen
The fays—what wert thou, Snow?
Leave eastern Greece its fabled fleece,
For Northland has its own—
The witches of Norway pluck their geese,
And thou art their plumes of down.

XVI.

The snow! the snow! It brings to mind
A thousand happy things,
And but one sad one—'tis to find
Too sure that Time hath wings!
O, ever sweet is sight or sound
That tells of long ago;
And I gaze around, with thoughts profound,
Upon the falling snow!

THE CASTLE OF TIME.

A VISION.

I.

Up rose the full moon in a heaven of blue,
And sweetly sang the hermit nightingale,
As, with slow steps, I saunter'd through the vale,
Brushing aside the wild flowers bright with dew:
There hung a purple haze athwart the hills;
And all was hush'd beside me and remote;
Gleam'd, as they trickled, the pellucid rills,
Or 'neath the sallows dark seclusion sought;
The stars, dim twinkling in celestial mirth,
Seem'd sleepless eyes that watch'd the slumber-
mantled earth.

II.

A while I stray'd beneath broad arbute trees,
As the scarce-breathing west wind, with a sigh,
The glittering greenness kiss'd in wandering by;
Around me roses bloom'd; and, over these,

The moss-brown'd lilac and laburnum bright
Commingled their blown richness; perfume sweet
From wild flowers breathed, and violets exquisite,
Crush'd in their beauty by my careless feet;
O'er earth and air a slumbrous influence stole,
With wizard power, that charm'd the billows of the soul.

III.

So, as reclining 'mid the blooms I lay,
The moonlight and the landscape bland declined,
And, rapt from outward shows, the trancèd mind
Woke 'mid the splendours of another day.
It was a wondrous scene; receding far
Into the distance, hills o'er hills arose,
Of mighty shapes and shades irregular,—
Here green with verdùre, and there capp'd in snows;
Here gorgeous groves, there desert wastes sublime;
And, gazing, well I knew the changeful realm of Time.

IV.

In the midst a Castle stood, whose arches show'd
All architecture's grand varieties;
Carved columns rear'd their summits to the skies,
While, over others, the dark mould was strew'd:
Pile picturesque and wild! with spires and domes,
And pyramids and pillars manifold,
And vaults, wherein both bird and beast made homes;
And part was strongly fresh, and part was old,
And part was mantled o'er by Ruin grey,
And part from eye of man had wholly sunk away.

V.

Methought a spirit led me up the tower,
And bade me gaze to the east; there, calmly bright,
Revolving pageants charm'd my trancèd sight,
In that deep flow of inspiration's hour,
As changed the vision. On Moriah's steeps
Behold a victim son for offering bound,
While the keen knife the aweless Patriarch keeps
Unsheathed to perpetrate the mortal wound.
But, hark, an angel,—"Stay thy hand from death;
For God hath known thee just, Heaven murmurs of
thy faith."

VI.

Now 'tis a desert vast; but wherefore roam
These countless multitudes? before them, lo,
The pillar'd smoke revolves, as on they go,
By Heaven directed to their promised home.
Their garments know not wear; the skies rain bread;
Out gushes water from the obedient rock,
By miracle at once sustain'd and led;
Until, at length, the Shepherd of the flock,
From Pisgah gazes down on Palestine,
Then shuts in death his eyes that glow with hope divine.

VII.

A crimson battle-field! careering steeds
Over the prostrate and the perish'd driven;
The moon turns pale, the sun stands still in heaven,
As Israel conquers, and the godless bleeds.

A son's rebellion—"Spare him!" cried the King,
The Father; but from Ephraim, tidings dire
Smite on his heart; for Joab, triumphing,
Hath slain the erring in relentless ire:
Then bleeds his heart, then bows he in despair—
"Oh, Absalom, my son!" and tears his silver hair.

VIII.

A banquet hall—'tis gorgeous Babylon,
The palace, and the satraps; radiant shine
A thousand lamps; the heathen's festal wine
Brims golden cups that in God's temple shone;
Quench'd is the mirth, the music dies away—
Belshazzar trembles; for a visible hand
Writes on the wall the date of his decay—
Wealth reft, life forfeited, and bondaged land:
'Twas darkness then, but, ere red morning shone,
The Persian bursts his gates, the Mede is on his throne!

IX.

Spirit of Homer! is it but a dream,[28]
A spectre of the fancy, that reveals
To us such majesty and power, and steals
The bosom from what is, to what may seem?
It matters not; still Agamemnon reigns,
The king of men; by Chrysa moors the fleet;
Achilles in his chariot scours the plains,
Showing to Troy slain Hector at his feet;
Andromache laments, and Ruin lowers
On Priam's princely line, and Ilion's fated towers.

X.

Behold the Persian—like a green bay tree
Flaunting in summer beauty; to the shores
Of Hellespont an armed million pours
To shackle Greece—to subjugate the free:
Yet Xerxes, thou wert man, and shall not die
Thy passionate saying; still thy voice we hear,
As, o'er the peopled plain's immensity,
Flash to the sunset, corslet, helm, and spear,
"A century hence—and of this fair array
There beats no bosom now, but shall be silent clay!"[29]

XI.

Behold on yon seven hills a city rear'd,[30]
Immense, majestic, mistress of the world;
O'er all the standard of her power unfurl'd,
By subject nations is obey'd and fear'd.
She calls her vassals—Mauritania pours
Her golden tribute; proud Hispania bows;
Rude Albion answers from her chalky shores;
The echo sounds o'er Scandinavia's snows;
Swart Scythia hears the summons; and, afar,
Blue Thule in the main 'neath Eve's descending star.[31]

XII.

City of Dido, by the sounding sea!
I know thee by thy grandeur desolate—
Green weeds wave rankly o'er thy levell'd gate,
The sea-fowl and the serpent dwell in thee—

Where are thy navies? Whelm'd beneath the wave!
Where are thine armies, that, with thundering tread,
Shook Rome to her foundation-rocks, and gave
Manure to Cannæ of the Roman dead?[32]
Nought of thy vanish'd state the silence speaks;
The fisher spreads his nets, on high the heron shrieks![33]

XIII.

O, hundred-gated Thebes, magnificent![34]
Where Memnon's image hymn'd the march of Time,
As sank the day-star 'mid the dewy prime,
In tones celestial with the sunrise blent,
I know thee by thy remnants Titan-like;
And thee, proud Memphis, proud, alas! no more,[35]
Whose thinn'd and desolate fragments scarcely strike
The pilgrim's eye on thy blue river's shore;
And thee, Palmyra, 'mid whose silent piles[36]
Still lingering grandeur sleeps, the unworshipp'd sun
still smiles.

XIV.

I see thee now, supreme Jerusalem!
The city of the chosen, great in power;
Glory surrounds thee in thy noontide hour,
Of Palestine's green plains the diadem.
Now graves give up their dead 'mid thunders drear;
A murmuring multitude on Calvary see!—
The temple's vail is rent!—a sound of fear!
'Tis "Eli! Eli!" from the accursed tree;
Daylight shrinks waning from the scene abhorr'd,
And shuddering Nature shares the pangs that pierce
her Lord.[37]

XV.

From Danube, see, from Don, and Volga's banks,
Come pouring to the South barbarian hordes,[38]
Innumerous, irresistible; keen swords
Their only heritage, their home the ranks:
Erst like the locusts on Egyptian vales
They darken, and the treasured shores consume;
And Science is o'erthrown, and Courage fails;
And droop the eagles of imperial Rome;
Art palsied wanes; and Wisdom sighs to find
A second gloomier night o'ershadowing lost mankind.

XVI.

A fierce acclaim! Alarm's loud trumpet-call—
And up in arms the banded nations rise,
The Red Cross standards flout the morning skies,[39]
To rescue Palestine from Paynim thrall:
The Lion-hearted girds his falchion on,—
Bright beams the Gallic ensign o'er the wave,—
Death's vultures crowd o'er carnaged Ascalon;
But Salem, unsubdued, resists the brave:
Where is the victim gone? His minstrel plays,—
And from false Austria's cell come back responsive lays![40]

XVII.

Now rising from the dusk-subjected Earth,
Forth walks Civilisation, to illume
With learning's light divine the Gothic gloom,
Awaking man as 'twere to second birth:

Greens barren valley,—blossoms desert plain,—
Towers city flourishing,—smiles hamlet home,—
Track venturous navies the engirding main,—
O'er willing lands Religion's banners roam,—
Dawns mental day—and Freedom's sacred pile
Is rear'd, by proud resolve, in Albion's favour'd isle.

XVIII.

Most fortunate, most fortunate, for now
Broods over Gaul the tempest-cloud of blood!
Down, down it streams around, a crimson flood!
Afar the deluge pours, to overthrow
Peoples and empires; Chaos frowns on man
With midnight threatening; Reason is o'erthrown;
Red Murder roams in Desolation's van;
And frenzied Anarchy makes earth her own;
Hope trembles; and Religion, with a sigh,
Shrieks as her burning shrines rejoice the Atheist's eye.

XIX.

Yet, Queen of Nations, yet in thee are found
The buckler and the sword; thy war hath gone
Amid Heaven's foes, invincible, alone—
For all beside were bleeding, faint, or bound:
The rampart of the righteous, in the day
Of need, thy succouring arm is strongly felt:
Before thy flooding sunlight rush away
Hell's spectral legions, and in shadows melt;
Crush'd is the serpent brood—the unholy crew,
And triumph wreathes thy brows on deathless Waterloo!

XX.

I listen, for a sound salutes mine ear
Of harmony divine; beneath the star
Of Eve, 'tis borne across the waves afar,
From isles that studding Ocean's robe appear:
Hearken ye now to Adoration's tones!
At Truth's pure shrine the heathen bows the knee!
Owns his low worthlessness, submissly owns
His trust in Him who bled on Calvary!
'Mid the blue main the sailor stays his oars,
Wondering at incense such from lone Pacific shores.

XXI.

Not yet, not yet, not yet Heaven's sunlight darts
Through Error's clouds and Ignorance's night:
Wide are the realms that, in their cheerless blight,
Pine darkling, with forlorn and sullied hearts.—
'Neath priesthood bigotry, 'neath tyrant thrall,
The wavering tremble, and the bold are mute;
Prone to the dust, o'erawed, earth's thousands fall
At the proud stamp of Superstition's foot:
Gleams the keen axe; outgushes the bright flood;
And Moloch's monstrous shrines are dew'd with human blood.

XXII.

And these know not the name of Liberty;
And those the boon of Reason cast aside;
Time is to both a dark predestined tide,
Floating their shallops to Oblivion's sea;

Pines in its prison unregarded thought;
The immortal soul is sullied and debased;
A worthless gift is conscience, given for nought;
From man the Maker's stamp is quite erased—
Like Autumn leaf, or fly in summer's ray,
He shines his little hour, and vanisheth away!

XXIII.

Then spake the Spirit,—"Turn thee to the West,
And see what lies before thee." It was dim;
For clouds on the blue air, with shadowy skim,
Were rolling their faint billows; and my breast
Tumultuously heaved, as forth I gazed
Upon that prospect's wild immensity;
For shadows show'd themselves, and then, erased,
Left not a trace on that decayless sky—
Bright forms, some fair like Hope; and some like Fear,
With spectral front sublime, stern, desolate, and drear.

XXIV.

Now, 'twas Elysian, bright and beautiful,
And now a chaos; though, sometimes, a star,
With momentary glitter, shone afar,
Through tempest-clouds that made its lustre dull.
All was a mystery, till the Spirit's touch
Open'd my eyelids, then the waste array'd
Its scenes in majesty, whose glow was such,
That dim seem'd that which first I had survey'd;
And such a scope was to that vista given,
That almost I could see the golden gates of Heaven.

XXV.

Beneath 'twas peace and purity; the sword
Was beat into the sickle; and mankind
(As if 'twere daylight pour'd upon the blind)
The crooked paths of Error quite abhorr'd:
Man's heart was changed; a renovated life
Throbb'd in his veins, and turn'd his thoughts to joy;
Sick'ning he shrank from blood and warlike strife,
Loathing the ire that led him to destroy;
Nations were link'd in brotherhood; and Crime
Was heard of but as what had stain'd departed Time.

XXVI.

Then I saw Angels coming down from Heaven,
And mingling with mankind, almost as pure;
For, through the atonement of the Cross, a sure
And marvellous redemption had been given:
All ends of the earth obey'd it—East and West,
And South and North, responsive echo gave.
The mighty sea of Discord, lulled to rest,
Was heard no more; Sin's storm was in its grave;
Religion's mandate bade the tumult cease;
And o'er each mountain-top the banners stream'd
of Peace.

XXVII.

In the same lair the tame beast and the wild
Together caved; the lion and the kid,
Half by the palm-tree's noontide shadow hid,
Roll'd 'mid the wild-flowers with the fearless child,

When sudden darkness fell: the crackling skies
Together rushed as 'twere a folding scroll;
I knew the end of human destinies,[41]
And speechless awe oppress'd my shrinking soul;
When stood an angel, earth's unburied o'er,
And swore by Him that lives, that "Time should be
no more!"

XXVIII.

This was the end of all things, and I turn'd
Around, but there lay Darkness, and a void—
Creation's map dim, blotted, and destroy'd—
The sun, the moon, the stars no longer burn'd.
Earth was not now, nor seem'd to have ever been—
Nor wind, nor wave, nor cloud, nor storm, nor shine;
Wide universal chaos wrapt the scene,
And hid the Almighty's countenance divine.
Then died my heart within me; I awoke,
And brightly on mine eyes the silver moonshine broke.

XXIX.

I knew the trees above me—heard the rills
That o'er their pebbles gently murmuring ran;
And saw the wild-blooms bathed in lustre wan,
And far away the azure-shoulder'd hills;
Then up I rose. But graven long shall last
On memory's page the marvels sleep hath shown—
With wonders spotted the receding past;
With mysteries manifold the future strewn;
The mouldering Castle of the spoiler, Time;
And Heaven's o'erarching dome, eternal and sublime!

NOTES TO MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

1.

By St Serf's lone tomb arose
The diryes of the sea.—P. 210.

ST MUNGO, or Kentigern, is said to have been born here, and to have been left by his mother to the tutelage of St Serf, or Servanus, who lived in a hermitage on the shore of the Forth, near Culross; and who, there dying, was buried. From this circumstance he was adopted as the guardian saint of the neighbourhood; and, down to the close of the fifteenth century, the people showed their veneration for his memory by an annual festival.

A chapel on the beach, at the east end of Culross, was dedicated to St Kentigern, but has long since disappeared.

2.

Thine old dim harbour, Culross,
Smoky, and worn, and grey.—P. 210.

Culross—or, as it is pronounced, *Cooross*—rose many centuries ago to be a considerable seat of population and mart of trade, from its vicinity to the handsome monastery erected by Malcolm, Thane of Fife, in 1217, and which was devoted to the Virgin and St Serf. Its monks were of the Cistercian Order; and the ruins yet extant indicate how considerable were its dimensions.

At a remote era Culross possessed a good deal of shipping, and carried on no inconsiderable maritime commerce, especially in the export trade of salt and coal. From James VI., and from Charles II., were also obtained grants which gave the

town the exclusive right of manufacturing *girdles*—thin circular plates of iron, used in Scotland for the baking of oatmeal or other cakes. For long this continued to be a source of revenue; but the peculiar privilege has long been virtually annulled, and nothing remains of the prosperity of the burgh but a profitless memory. A place more decayed or forlorn-looking cannot well be imagined.

3.

Who sailed with Barton or with Spens,
To breast the trampling waves.—P. 211.

Naval power very early showed itself to be an important matter to the sovereigns of Scotland—probably from what the country had been occasionally doomed to suffer from the maritime superiority of the Danes and Norwegians; and William the Lion made the building of ships an object of royal attention and patronage. We learn from the *Chronicon Mannia* (p. 39) that the fleet which Alexander II. led against Angus of Argyll, and in whose command he died, was a large one; and it is stated by Matthew Paris, (p. 668—edit. Wats.,) that the ship which conveyed Hugh de Chastillon, Earl of St Paul, and his vassals to the Holy Land, along with Louis IX. of France, in 1249, was built at Inverness.

By the time of Alexander III. the mercantile wealth of the country had greatly increased; and Lombard merchants made proposals for settling in the kingdom. It is curious to learn that the spots which they fixed on were the hill above Queensferry, and one of the islands at Cramond. At this period, says Mr Tytler, (*History*, vol. ii. 292,)—"Voyages had become more distant; the various countries which were visited more numerous; the risks of loss by piracy, tempest, or arrestment in foreign ports, more frequent; and it is a remarkable circumstance that the king, in consequence of this, became alarmed, and published an edict, by which he forbade the exportation of any merchandise from his dominions." This shortsighted policy, as we learn from the ancient historian Fordun, (à Goodall, vol. ii. p. 135,) created a great sensation in foreign countries, and occasioned an immediate resort of vessels from abroad into the Scottish harbours, to take up the commerce we had abandoned.

In the text, the line, if strictly adhering to historical propriety, should rather have joined the name of Wood to that of Barton, as a distinguished early Scottish navigator—Sir Patric

Spens, the "skeely skipper" of what Coleridge rightly calls "the grand old ballad" which bears his name, being probably less of the true than of the poetical and "ancient marinere" school. Although not alluded to by any of our old chroniclers, it is generally believed that the cause of his mission to Norway related to Margaret the daughter of King Eric, and grandchild of Alexander III. From the king, however, being mentioned as "sitting in Dunfermline toun," while it was not till after his death that Sir David Wemyss, and Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie—the famous wizard of Scottish tradition, and of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*—were really sent there, it has been feasibly suggested by Sir Walter Scott (*Border Minstrelsy*, vol. i.) that perhaps the unfortunate expedition of Sir Patric Spens was previous to that solemn embassy, and might be suggested by a natural desire of the king to see his grandchild and heir. According to Mr Buchan's edition of the story, (*Ancient Ballads*, 1828,) the errand of Spens was not to bring the Maiden of Norway to Scotland at all, but to convey thither her mother, the daughter of Alexander III. The remote antiquity of the ballad is undoubted, but this would carry it back even beyond the era of the generally received version.

Sir Andrew Wood, the celebrated Scottish admiral, who, in the reign of James IV., defeated the English fleet under Stephen Bull, was a native of Largo, in Fifeshire, and for his gallantry was invested by the king with the barony of his birthplace. It is rather a curious coincidence that, in 1676, Alexander Selkirk—the Robinson Crusoe of De Foe's inimitable narrative—should also have been born there. After an absence of several years, during which Selkirk endured the solitude of Juan Fernandez, he returned to Largo, bringing with him his gun, his sea-chest, and cocoa-nut cup—all of which are yet to be seen. After remaining nine months at home, he again took to sea, and, like Falconer, was never more heard of. The cottage in which he was born is still in the possession of his family, as are his chest and cup. The gun is now the property of Mr Lumsdaine of Lathallan.

4.

In whose grim vaults the Bruces kneel
In marble quaint and old.—P. 213.

The church of the ancient Abbey stood on its north side, and the tower in the midst is still to be seen. The portion of the church which remains has been fitted up, and is now used as a

place of parochial worship. The burial-vault of the Bruces is in the north aisle, and contains several very interesting monuments; among them is that of Sir George and his lady, around whom, on a low settle, are ranged their seven children, in a kneeling posture. The whole group is sculptured in marble, and is of great beauty—the costume of the time being distinctly and faithfully preserved. By letters patent, 8th July 1604, Edward Bruce, the Commendator of the Abbey of Kynloss, in Morayshire, at the time of the Reformation, and afterwards a Lord of Session, was created Baron Bruce of Kinloss by James VI. His son, Thomas, received the higher title of Earl of Elgin from Charles I., 19th June 1633.—*Vide* KEITH'S *Scottish Bishops*, (Russel's edit.,) p. 418-19.

5.

Where, inurned, lies hid the heart
Of young Kinloss deplored, &c.—P. 213.

From the side of the aisle, containing the tombs of the Bruces, there projects a piece of unornamented mason-work, which some years ago was found to hold the embalmed heart of Edward, second Lord Kinloss—a young and gallant noble, who was a prominent figure at the English court of James VI., and who fell near Bergen-op-Zoom in a sanguinary duel with his quondam friend, Sir Edward Sackville, afterwards Earl of Dorset. His heart was brought home in a silver case, and was there deposited amid the bones of his ancestors. The circumstances of this romantic and fatal rencontre are detailed with great precision by Mr Robert Chambers in his *Life of James the Sixth;* and forms one of the most striking and melancholy episodes of family history.

6.

Till Lythgo shows, in mirrored gold,
Its palaced loch so fair.—P. 276.

It is mentioned by both the chroniclers, Hemingford, (i. 196,) and Trivet, (332,) that Edward I., built "a strength" or fort "at Linlitcu" in 1301, and there enjoyed the festivities of Christmas. Lord Hailes inaccurately states that he wintered there; for, by dates since collected from writs, Chalmers has proved that, although Edward was still at Linlithgow on the 12th January, he was, on his way home, at Roxburgh on 12th February, and had reached Morpeth by the 24th.

This fort, or castle, was probably the same that was, a few years afterwards, taken by the stratagem of the patriotic yeoman, Binny, in concealing some of his followers in a waggon of hay; and who was rewarded by King Robert with an estate, which his posterity long afterwards enjoyed.

7.

Thy shrine, Dumanie, fades on sight.—P. 276.

Dalmeny Church is unquestionably of very great antiquity. From the style of its architecture, which a most competent authority, Mr Billings, (*Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities*, vol. i.,) has pronounced to be of the purest Norman, it is referred, at least, to the tenth or eleventh centuries. There is extant a charter of Waldeve, Earl of Dunbar, from 1166 to 1182, witnessed by the parson of Dumanie.

8.

The Forth, amid its islands bright,
Shimmers with lustre clear.—P. 276.

On these banks a castle was afterwards erected by the Earls of Wintoun, the picturesque ruins of which are yet a prominent object, by the edge of the Edinburgh and Glasgow railway, to the west of Kirkliston. Queen Mary is said to have slept there, on her flight from Lochleven to Hamilton, 2d May 1568.

9.

By Craig-Milor.—P. 277.

The name has for centuries been vulgarised into Craigmillar. Adam de Cardonnel, in his *Picturesque Antiquities*, adheres to the spelling in the text; although it is generally now admitted that the appellation is Gaelic—*Craig-moil-ard*, or the high bare rock running out into a plain. The original structure is of unknown antiquity.

10.

———*Through Wymet's glade*
To Inneresc they wound.—P. 277.

Woolmet, or Wymet, and Inneresc, were granted by charter of David I. to the Abbey of Dunfermline; the latter in confirmation of a previous grant by Malcolm Canmore and Queen

Margaret, (*Registrum de Dunfermlyn*, Imp. Edin. 1842, p. 5, 6.) A small mausoleum of the Wauchope family now occupies the site of the chapel of Wymet; and the venerable pile of St Michael the Archangel, at Inneresc, was ruthlessly demolished in 1804. The house in which the great Randolph died, which was about half a mile distant, was also hewn down, about ten years afterwards, to make way for a shabby masonic lodge.

11.

Cospatrick's stronghold of Dunbar
In proud defiance frowned.—P. 277.

The family of Cospatrick, a powerful Northumbrian nobleman, took refuge in Scotland after the death of Harold at Hastings, and in 1072 had extensive lands in the Merse and Lothian gifted them by Malcolm Canmore. They continued to be one of the most opulent and powerful houses in the east of Scotland for a considerable period, as evidenced by their donations, noted in the chartularies of Coldingham, Newbottle, Dryburgh, Kelso, Melrose, and Soltra. Founded on a steep rugged rock, within sea-mark, and communicating with the land through a covered passage, the castle of Dunbar might well, before the invention of gunpowder, have been deemed impregnable. It was often the theatre of warlike contention, and two great battles were fought in its immediate neighbourhood,—the first in 1296, when Earl Warenne defeated the army of Scotland sent for its relief; and the second in 1650, when Leslie was overthrown by Cromwell. It was often besieged, and as often bravely defended; but perhaps never so brilliantly as by Black Agnes against the Earl of Salisbury in 1337.

12.

Raised, by the monarch of the realm,
To Eleanor his queen.—P. 282.

This venerable memorial, which gives the name of "Queen's Cross" to the neighbouring locality in Northamptonshire, is a beautiful specimen of architecture, although much defaced by time and the efforts of renovators.

The "trellised" vest, mentioned in stanza XXIV., was a species of armour, so called by contemporary Norman writers, and consisted of a cloth coat, reaching only to the haunches. This was intersected by broad straps of leather, so laid on as

to cross each other, and leave small intervening squares of cloth, in the middle of which was a knob of steel.—*Vide* MEYRICK'S *Ancient Armour*, vol. i. p. 11.

13.

———*Within the haunted glen*
Now herds unharmed are grazing.—P. 285.

A clearer day has dispelled the marvels, which showed themselves in heaven above and in earth beneath, when twilight and superstition went hand in hand. Horace's

"Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
Nocturnos Lemures, portentaque Thessala,"

as well as Milton's

"Gorgons, Hydras, and Chimæras dire,"

have all been found wanting when reduced to the admeasurements of science; and the "sounds that syllable men's names, on sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses," are quenched in silence, or only exist in what James Hogg most poetically terms

"That undefined and mingled hum,
Voice of the desert, never dumb."

The inductive philosophy was "the bare bodkin" which gave many a pleasant vision "its quietus." "Homo, naturæ minister," saith Lord Bacon, "et interpres, tantum facit et intelligit, quantum de naturæ ordine se vel mente observaverit: nec amplius scit nec potest."—*Nov. Organum*, Aph. I.

The fabulous dragon has long acted a conspicuous part in the poetry both of the north and south. We find him in the legends of Regnar Lodbrog and Kempion, and in the episode of Brandimarte in the second book of the Orlando Inamorato. He is also to be recognised as the huge snake of the Edda, and figures with ourselves in the stories of the Chevalier St George and the Dragon—of Moor of Moorhall and the Dragon of Wantley—in the Dragon of Loriton—in the Laidley Worm of Spindleton Haugh—in the Flying Serpent of Lockburne—the Snake of Wormieston, &c. &c. Bartholinus and Saxo-Grammaticus volunteer us some curious information regarding a species of these monsters, whose particular office was to keep watch over hidden treasure. The winged Gryphon is of "auld descent," and has held a place in unnatural history from Herodotus (*Thalia*, 116, and *Melpomène*, 13, 27) to Milton, (*Paradise Lost*, book v.)—

"As when a Gryphon, through the wilderness,
With winged course, o'er hill or moory dale,
ursues the Arimaspian," &c.

14.

Witches, adown the sleety breeze,
To Lapland flats careering.—P. 285.

Of the many mysterious chapters of the human mind, surely one of the most obscure and puzzling is that of witchcraft. For some reason, not sufficiently explained, Lapland was set down as a favourite seat of the orgies of the "Midnight Hags." When, in the ballad of "The Witch of Fife," the auld gudeman, in the exercise of his conjugal authority, questions his errant spouse regarding her nocturnal absences without leave, she is made ecstatically to answer—

"Whan we came to the Lapland lone,
The fairies war all in array;
For all the genii of the North
War keepyng their holyday.
The warlocke men and the weird womyng,
And the fays of the woode and the steep,
And the phantom hunteris all were there,
And the mermaidis of the deep.
And they washit us all with the witch-watir,
Distillit fra the moorland dew,
Quhill our beauty bloomit like the Lapland rose,
That wylde in the foreste grew."

QUEEN'S WAKE, Night 1st.

"Like, but oh how different," are these unearthly goings-on to the details in the Walpurgis Night of Faust, (act v. scene 1.) "The phantom-hunters" of the north were not the "Wilde Jäger" of Burger, or "the Erl-king" of Goethe. It is related by Hearne, that the tribes of the Chippewa Indians suppose the northern lights to be occasioned by the frisking of herds of deer in the fields above, caused by the haloo and chase of their departed friends.

15.

Or mingle in the bridal dance,
To vanish ere cock-crowing.—P. 285.

It is very probable that the apparitional visit of "Alonzo the Brave" to the bridal of "the Fair Imogene," was suggested to M. G. Lewis by the story in the old chronicles of the skeleton masquer taking his place among the wedding revellers, at Jedburgh Castle, on the night when Alexander III., in 1286, espoused as his second queen, Joleta, daughter of the Count le Dreux. These were the palmy days of portents; and the pro-

phecy uttered by Thomas of Ercildoune, of the storm which was to roar

"From Ross's hills to Solway sea,"

was supposed to have had its fulfilment in the death of the lamented monarch, which occurred, only a few months after the appearance of the skeleton masquer, by a fall from his horse, over a precipice, while hunting between Burntisland and Kinghorn, at a place still called "the King's Wood-end."

Wordsworth appears to have had the subject in his eye, in two of the stanzas of his lyric entitled *Presentiments*, the last of which runs as follows:—

"Ye daunt the proud array of war,
Pervade the lonely ocean far
As sail hath been unfurled,
For dancers in the festive hall
What ghostly partners hath your call
Fetch'd from the shadowy world."

POETICAL WORKS, (1845,) p. 176.

The same incident has been made the subject of some very spirited verses, in a little volume—*Ballads and Lays from Scottish History*—published in 1844, and which, I fear, has not attracted the attention to which its intrinsic merits assuredly entitle it.

16.

When thou at Eventide art roaming.—P. 301.

This little poem is curious from a circumstance connected with it. Towards the end of 1817, the Rev. Dr M— gave a copy of the MS. to Mr Constable, and it was inserted in his magazine for November, without mark or signature. In 1819, *Emmeline*, the posthumous work of Mrs Brunton, appeared, with a biographical memoir by the Professor, and an appendix of four small poems, the last of which was this identical one, accompanied with a very flattering notice. On explanation, it appeared that a written copy was found in the work-box, which the authoress of *Self-Control* had been using on the day previous to her fatal illness; and no doubt of its being hers was entertained, on account of her not being in the habit of making copies. "It was so unusual with her to transcribe," says the Doctor in a letter now before me, "that this is nearly the only instance. I never hesitated, therefore, to consider it as hers, and to view it as a legacy intended for myself. In the latter light, I flatter myself I may regard it still; though I, of course, restore to its proper owner the merit of the composition."

I am only sorry that circumstances occurred to break this illusion; but it was broken.

17.

When Husbac fierce, and Olave, Mona's king.—P. 373.

Rothesay Castle is first mentioned in history in connection with its siege by Husbac the Norwegian, and Olave, king of Man, in 1228. Among other means of defence, it is said that the Scots poured down boiling pitch and lead on the heads of their enemies; but it was, however, at length taken, after the Norwegians had lost three hundred men. In 1263, it was retaken by the Scots after the decisive battle of Largs.

18.

And round thy peak the phalanx'd Butesmen stood.—P. 374.

This hill was the scene of a conflict between the men of Bute and the troops of Lisle, the English governor, in which that general was slain, and his severed head, presented to the Lord High Steward, was suspended from the battlements of the castle.

19.

When Rothesay's Duke was heir to Scotland's throne.—P. 374.

In 1398, Robert III. constituted his eldest son Duke of Rothesay, a title still held by every male heir-apparent to the British crown. It was the first introduction of the ducal dignity—originally a Norman one—into Scotland.

20.

Bonkill's stout Stewart.—P. 375.

The walls forming the choir of the very ancient church dedicated to the Holy Virgin are still nearly entire, and stand close to the present parish church of Rothesay. Within a traceried niche, on one side, is the recumbent figure of a knight in complete armour, apparently of the kind in use about the time of Robert II. or III. His feet are upon a lion couchant, and his head upon a faithful watch-dog, with a collar, in beautiful preservation, encircling its neck. The coat-of-arms denotes the person represented to have been of royal lineage. Popular tradition individualises him as the "Stout Stewart of

Bonkill" of Blind Harry the minstrel, who fell with Sir John the Grahame at the battle of Falkirk—although that hero was buried near the field of action, as his tombstone there, in the old churchyard, still records.

Sir John Stewart of Bonkill was uncle and tutor to the then Lord High Steward, at that time a minor.

A female figure and child recumbent, also elaborately sculptured in black marble, adorn the opposite niche, and under them, in alto-relievo, are several figures in religious habits. Another effigy of a knight, but much defaced, lies on the ground-floor of the choir—the whole of which was cleaned out and put in order by the late Marquis of Bute in 1827.

21.

And to his captive boy-prince left his crown.—P. 375.

On the 4th of April 1406, this unfortunate prince—overwhelmed with grief for the death of his eldest son, David, duke of Rothesay and Earl of Carrick, who miserably perished of hunger in Falkland Castle; and the capture, during a time of truce, of his younger son, Prince James, by the English—died in the castle of Rothesay of a broken heart. The closet, fourteen feet by eight, in which he breathed his last, is still pointed out, in the south-east corner of the castle.

22.

To fill thy lonely precincts with perfume,
Yet lifts no more its green head to the skies.—P. 375.

In the court of the castle is a remarkable thorn-tree, which for centuries had waved above the chapel, now in ruins; and which, at the distance of a yard from the ground, measures six feet three inches in circumference. In 1839, it fell from its own weight, and now lies prostrate, with half its roots uncovered, but still vigorous in growth.

23.

Sunlight, on the western hill,
Dies with a quick decay.—P. 381.

Twilight in tropical countries is of very short duration; the transition from day to darkness being much more rapid than in our northern latitudes.

24.

Camdeo hurls, &c.—P. 381.

The Indian god of love. By a beautiful allegorical fable, his bowstring is said to be framed of living bees. *Vide* Southey's *Curse of Kehama*, for a wonderful tissue of oriental superstition woven into the loom of poetry. *Vishnoo*, the Preserver, in the Hindoo Pantheon. *Meru Mount*, the Olympus of eastern mythology, on which the deities are supposed to meet in conclave.—*Vide* MAURICE'S *Indian Antiquities*, Sir WILLIAM JONES, &c.

25.

The pillar'd pride
Of Balbec.—P. 382.

The curious reader would do well to consult Pocoke's *Travels*, where an accurate account of these wonderful and stupendous ruins will be found. Amid the frigid and formal exaggerations of Darwin's poetry, the description of the desolation of Palmyra in the *Botanic Garden* will be found at once picturesque and powerful.

26.

———*The sands*
Uptossing high, and mingling earth with heaven.—P. 382.

For descriptions of this Eastern phenomenon, see Park, Bruce, Volney, Niebuhr, and almost every other Oriental traveller.

27.

The undulating arch
Of wild cane framed.—P. 383.

The bridges over narrow streams, in many parts of Spanish America, are said to be built of cane, which, however strong to support the passenger, are yet waved in the agitation of the storm, and frequently add to the effect of a mountainous and picturesque scenery.—*Note on Gertrude of Wyoming.*

28.

Spirit of Homer! is it but a dream?—P. 393.

It is somewhat remarkable that the mists of time should have so darkly intervened as to make at once the poet and his

theme matters of dubiety; but so it has happened with the great epic bards of the east and west, with Homer and with Ossian.

"The question as to the truth of the tale of 'Troy divine,'" remarks Lord Byron, "much of it resting on the talismanic word 'ἄπειρος;' probably Homer had the same notion of distance that a coquette has of time, and when he talks of 'boundless,' means half a mile; as the latter, by a like figure, when she says *eternal* attachment, simply specifies three weeks."

It is no bad example of the mutability and perishing nature of all earthly things, that a realm, whose very existence has become a matter of speculation to the classical antiquary, should have given rise to two of the grandest exhibitions of human genius, in the magnificent epic of the Greeks, and the exquisite epic of the Romans.

29.

There beats no bosom now, but shall be silent clay.—P. 394.

"One touch of nature," as the all-observant Shakspeare remarks, "makes the whole world kin;" and really the little anecdote in the text goes far with me in atoning for the ambitious invasion of the proud and puissant Xerxes; for Nature is so steady and exact in her operations, that no heart but one originally benevolent and generous would have ventured on such an apophthegm at such an hour.

Fate, however, intended these myriads a much shorter duration than that which the monarch lamented, as the field of Marathon too bloodily illustrated—"When the sun set, where were they?"

30.

Behold on yon seven hills a city rear'd.—P. 394.

In the text an endeavour is made to sketch the extent of the Roman empire. Perhaps to the loyal of our own country, it may not be a little gratifying to know, that imperial Rome, at the zenith of her glory, never commanded an extent of population equal to that of Great Britain at the present day. We know of no prouder illustration of the effects of mental energy over nature in a state destitute of cultivation, or paralysed by luxurious sloth.

31.

Blue Thule in the main 'neath Eve's descending star.—P. 394.

"Thule," the Shetland of the ancients, is poetically characterised by Horace as "*Ultima Thule*," from its being the most remote situation of olden geography, and consequently considered as one of the "ends of the earth."

The lines of Seneca (Medea) pointing out the probable effects of future discovery, seem embued almost with the spirit of prophecy, and have been appositely affixed as the motto to the *Life of Columbus* by Mr Washington Irving.

32.

Shook Rome to her foundation-rocks, and gave
Manure to Cannæ of the Roman dead.—P. 395.

Never, perhaps, except by the earlier invasion of Pyrrhus, was the independence of the Roman State so severely threatened as by the invasion of Hannibal.

As to the horrible carnage of Cannæ, some notion may be formed from the succinct account of Livy:—"Ad fidem, deinde, tam lætarum rerum, effundi in vestibulo curiæ jussit annulos aureos, qui tantus acervus fuit, ut, metientibus dimidium super tres modios explèsse, sint quidam auctores. Adjecit deinde verbis, quo majoris cladis indicium esset, neminem, nisi equitem, atque eorum ipsorum primores, id gerere insigne."—*Hist.* lib. xxiii.

33.

The fisher spreads his nets, on high the heron shrieks!—P. 395.

Few traces of ancient Carthage are said to remain, except the ruins of an aqueduct and the site of the harbour, now called El Morsa. The reader may consult Dr Shaw's *Travels*, vol. i., and Chateaubriand's *Travels*, vol. ii., although the accounts given by each are very dissimilar.

"The iniquity of oblivion," apostrophiseth the eloquent Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Hydriotophia*, "blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the Pyramids? Erostratos lives, who burned the temple of Diana—he is almost lost that built it. Time hath spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse, confounded that of himself. In vain we

compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equal durations; and Thersites is like to live as long as Agamemnon. Without the favour of the everlasting register, the first man had been as unknown as the last, and Methuselah's long life had been his only chronicle."

34.

O, hundred-gated Thebes, magnificent!—P. 395.

Thebes has been more fortunate than either Troy or Carthage, in the circumstance of some of its stupendous structures still remaining. By the modern natives it is called Luxor.

The most recent accounts of this ancient city are to be found in the travels of Belzoni, who collected from amidst the rubbish and sand some of his finest specimens of Egyptian antiquity. See also Carne's interesting *Letters from the East.*

As to the celebrated statue of Memnon, it may be only necessary briefly to observe, that, according to Pausanias, it was broken by Cambyses. The upper portion was seen lying neglected on the ground, but the lower division emitted duly at sunrise the sound resembling the breaking of a harp-string over-wound up.

From its grandeur Thebes was also called Diospolis, the city of Jupiter, or of the Sun; from its hundred gates it obtained the additional appellation of "Hecatompylos," to distinguish it from Thebes in Bœotia, and was at one period the finest city of the world.

35.

And thee, proud Memphis, proud, alas! no more.—P. 395.

Memphis, situated on the river of the same name, was once a capital city of Upper Egypt. Of its ancient pride and magnificence but few vestiges now remain; and of the countless thousands that, generation after generation, flourished within its walls, how many names are now remembered?

36.

And thee, Palmyra, 'mid whose silent piles.—P. 395.

One of the chief wonders of this in every way wonderful city was the Temple of the Sun, many columns of which, according to Wood and Volney, yet remain. It is one of the "*arcana*"

of political economy, how a city encompassed by a desert came to attain its power and population; and we would trouble Mr M'Culloch to explain this?

37.

And shuddering Nature shares the pangs that pierce her Lord. —P. 395.

Vide Gospel of St Matthew, chap. xxviii.—The reader need scarcely be directed to that most interesting of all sieges in the history of the Jews by Josephus, or to the recent beautiful scriptural drama, *The Fall of Jerusalem*, by Professor Milman.

For an account of the present state of a city, on many accounts the most remarkable in the world, whether we refer to its origin, its revolutions, or the scenes it has witnessed, the curious are directed to the Travels of Vicomte Chateaubriand, Dr Shaw, Mr Buckingham, and Mr Rae Wilson; but more particularly to the account of Dr Clarke—one of the finest things that ever came from the pen of that most accomplished traveller.

38.

From Danube, see, from Don, and Volga's banks,
Come pouring to the South barbarian hordes.—P. 396.

On this most comprehensive topic, we can barely refer to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Sismondi's *Histoire de Republiques Italiennes*, Robertson's Dissertation, prefixed to *Charles V.*, and Hallam's *History of the Middle Ages*.

39.

The Red Cross standards flout the morning skies.—P. 396.

The Crusaders bore on their banners or arms the symbol of the Cross, as marking out the cause for which they had taken up arms. The first account I can find of its being displayed on the banners and arms of war is in the instance of the troops of Constantine the Great, after his alleged miraculous conversion to Christianity—an account of which may be found in Milner's *Church History*, vol. iii., as abridged by him from Eusebius.

It is said that to Constantine and his army the figure of a cross had appeared one afternoon on the sky, with the inscrip-

tion "Conquer by this." The punishment of the Cross was thereafter abolished throughout his dominions, and the symbol made one of dignity and honour.

Alluding to the Cross, Mr Gibbon says, "The same symbol sanctified the arms of the soldiers of Constantine; the cross glittered on their helmets, was engraved on their shields, was interwoven into their banners; and the consecrated emblems which adorned the person of the emperor himself were distinguished only by richer materials and more exquisite workmanship."

For a *History of the Crusades*, and a very interesting one, the reader is referred to the work of the late Mr Mills; and episodically to the *Tales of the Crusaders*, by the author of *Waverley*, who has therein found a subject, and produced a work, worthy of his genius.

40.

And from false Austria's cell come back responsive lays!
—P. 396.

An allusion to Blondel, the favourite minstrel of Cœur-de-Lion, who, according to the legend, discovered in Germany the scene of his master's imprisonment.

41.

I knew the end of human destinies.—P. 401.

"Having played our parts," quaintly observeth old erudite Burton, "we must for ever be gone. Tombs and monuments have the like fate:—

'Data sunt ipsis quoque fata sepulchris.'

Kingdoms, towns, provinces, and cities, have their periods, and are consumed. In those flourishing times of Troy, Mycenæ was the fairest city of Greece—*Græciæ cunctæ imperitabat;* but it, alas! and that *Assyrian Nineveh, are quite overthrown.* The like fate hath that Egyptian and Bœotian Thebes, Delos, *commune Græciæ consiliabulum*, the common council-house of Greece; and Babylon, the greatest city that ever the sun shone upon, hath nothing now but the walls and rubbish left.

'Quid Pandionis restant, nisi nomen, Athenæ?'

Thus Pausanias complained in his times. And where is Troy itself now, Persepolis, Carthage, Cyzicum, Sparta, Argos, and

all those Grecian cities? Syracuse and Agrigentum, the fairest towns in Sicily, which had sometimes 700,000 inhabitants, are now decayed: the names of Hieron, Empedocles, &c. of those mighty numbers of people, only left. One Anacharsis is remembered among the Scythians; the world itself must have an end, and every part of it. *Cetera igitur urbes sunt mortales*, as Peter Gillius concludes of Constantinople; *hæc sanæ quamdiu erunt homines, futura mihi videtur immortalis;* but 'tis not so; nor size, nor strength, nor sea, nor land, can vindicate a city; but it and all must vanish at last. And, as to a traveller, great mountains seem plains afar off, at last are not discerned at all; cities, men, monuments decay:—

'Nec solidis prodest sua machina terris.'

The names are only left, those at length forgotten, and are involved in perpetual night."

Nothing can be more beautiful in itself, or more illustrative of our subject, than that passage in the epistle of Servius Sulpitius to Cicero, wherein, from the contemplation of national, he endeavours to bear him up against personal calamities. "On my return from Asia, as I was sailing from Ægina towards Megara, I began to contemplate the prospect around me. Ægina was behind, Megara was before me; Piræus on the right, Corinth on the left; all which towns, once famous and flourishing, now lie overturned, and buried in their ruins," &c.

How much and how often has the balance of power fluctuated among the different states of Europe, since the time that Italy was the leviathan among them? What is Italy now, though containing Rome, Genoa, and Venice, in its bosom, in comparison with Great Britain, with Russia, with France, with Austria, and others, which, at the era of her glory, were designated the "barbari," or "barbarians," with as little scrupulosity as a modern Parisian dancing-master desecrates the mob under the comprehensive epithet of the "*canaille.*" As to Norway, her political importance is entirely past, or, at best, merged into that of Sweden; the chivalry of Spain has degenerated into monkish superstition; and Poland, dismembered and torn to pieces, has no place among the modern divisions of the earth's surface.

"Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum."

THE END.

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